

Jonas of Bobbio

*Life of Columbanus, Life of John
of Réomé, and Life of Vedast*

*Translated with introduction and commentary
by Alexander O'Hara and Ian Wood*

TH



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Volume 64

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ALEXANDER O'HARA and IAN WOOD

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In memory of my father Hugh Joseph O'Hara (1943–83)
(A. O'H.)

In memory of Margaret Gibson (1938–94),
and for John Davies, the founders of TTH
(I. N. W.)

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PREFACE

The *Life of Columbanus* has a special place in the history of Translated Texts for Historians. Among the history courses for which John Davies was external examiner at Leeds in 1981 there was a special subject on Columbanus (inspired originally by the work of Thomas Charles-Edwards), for which the students were issued with a typescript of Ian Wood's translation of Book II of Jonas's *Life* (since only Book I was available in an English-language publication). This prompted John to suggest that there was a need for translations of late-antique and early-medieval texts, and as a result he approached Liverpool University Press with the idea of a series: the result was TTH, and Jonas's *Life of Columbanus* was intended to be one of the earliest volumes.

For a variety of reasons the translation of Jonas was put on hold, although the idea was never entirely abandoned. Then, in 2009, Alexander O'Hara, inspired by Richard Sharpe's translation of Adomnán's *Life of Columba*, sent in a proposal for a translation of Jonas's works. Alex had just finished his thesis on Jonas, under the guidance of Robert Bartlett at St Andrews, where he had held a Carnegie Scholarship. The committee of TTH decided that it would be worthwhile combining the original plan with the new submission. Alex received subsequent support for his work on the volume from the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, where the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) supported a project on 'The Columbanian Network: Elite Identities and Christian Communities in Europe (550–750)' from 2013–16.

Undoubtedly a translation of Jonas in the 1980s would have looked very different from the present one. In 1980, although scholars were working on the impact of the Irish on early medieval Europe, little attention had been paid to Merovingian hagiography, other than that of Gregory of Tours, and even his hagiographical work had only just begun to be the subject of intense attention. This changed radically in the course of the 1980s and 1990s, with the publication of numerous studies of Merovingian hagiography. More recently there has also been something of an explosion

in the study of seventh-century Frankish monasticism. Even so, Jonas himself has been relatively neglected.

Ideally this translation would have been ready in time for the celebrations marking the 1400th anniversary of Columbanus's death (which is dated by most, but not all, manuscripts of Jonas to 23 November). Translating Jonas, however, is very much more awkward than one might expect: his Latin is not always easy, nor is Krusch's edition of his works beyond criticism. The creation of an exact translation of the *Lives* of Columbanus, John, and Vedast, which paid proper attention to the quirks of Jonas's Latin (and of Krusch's edition) proved to be a surprisingly laborious task. We have been fortunate to have been able to seek advice from Michael Lapidge, Gillian Clark and Mary Whitby, Graham Barrett (and George Woudhuysen), and many others: their initials ML, GC, MW, and GB, which occur throughout the notes, give an inadequate indication of how indebted we have been to them for advice. In addition, we have benefited greatly from Albrecht Diem's guidance, especially for his appendix on the relationship between Jonas's works and the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*, and also from the advice of Kurt Smolak over the question of the style of the *Life of Vedast*. We also wish to thank Mark Humphries for the splendid cover he designed, and Alison Welsby at Liverpool University Press.

Maps 1–3, 6–7, and 9, which are derived from Ménestrel (www.menestrel.fr), were redrawn by John Hunt (mapperou@gmail.com). Maps 4 and 5 were drawn by Jaroslav Synek (Czech Academy of Sciences): Map 8 is an adaptation of that in the *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VIII^e siècle*, vol. 14, *Province ecclésiastique de Reims*, ed. L. Pietri (Paris, 2007), p. 87. We thank the editors of the Éditions de Boccard for permission to make use of their original.

We have been fortunate to have been working on Jonas at a time when Columbanus has been the subject of considerable attention. We have undoubtedly gained a great deal from the centenary conferences that have been devoted to the Irish saint. These were held in May, September and October 2015, in the three most important places for Columbanus's life, Bangor, Luxeuil, and Bobbio. Above all, we have learnt an enormous amount from the extraordinary excavations, conducted by Sébastien Bully, that have taken place at Luxeuil, which have transformed our understanding of one of the two major foundations of Columbanus. If we had completed our translation before the excavations had been underway, there is no question that it would have been rendered out of date very quickly. Certainly, understanding of Columbanus and his hagiographer is

changing rapidly. But this translation can at least be seen as a statement of the *status quaestionis* at the fourteenth centenary of the saint's death.

A. O'H.

I. N. W.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AASS</i>	<i>Acta Sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur</i>
<i>CCL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina</i>
<i>CLA</i>	<i>Codices Latini Antiquiores</i>
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
<i>DLH</i>	Gregory of Tours, <i>Decem Libri Historiarum</i> = <i>Histories</i>
Du Cange	<i>Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis</i>
<i>Ep(p).</i>	<i>Epistula(e)</i>
Fredegar	Chronicle of Fredegar
<i>HF</i>	<i>Hisperica Famina</i>
Lewis and Short	<i>A New Latin Dictionary</i>
<i>LGC</i>	<i>Liber in Gloria Confessorum</i> = <i>Glory of the Confessors</i> (see Gregory of Tours)
<i>LGM</i>	<i>Liber in Gloria Martyrum</i> = <i>Glory of the Martyrs</i> (see Gregory of Tours)
<i>LVP</i>	<i>Liber Vitae Patrum</i> = <i>Lives of the Fathers</i> (see Gregory of Tours)
<i>LVM</i>	<i>Liber de Virtutibus Sancti Martini</i> = <i>Miracles of St Martin</i> (see Gregory of Tours)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
<i>AA</i>	<i>Auctores Antiquissimi</i>
<i>SRG</i>	<i>Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum</i>
<i>SRM</i>	<i>Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum</i>
MIÖG	<i>Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung</i>
Niermeyer	J. F. Niermeyer, ed., <i>Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus</i>
<i>PCBE IV</i>	<i>Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire</i> , vol. IV, 1–2, <i>Prosopographie de la Gaule chrétienne (314–614)</i>

<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>
<i>SCO</i>	<i>Sancti Columbani Opera</i>
<i>VC</i>	Jonas, <i>Vita Columbani</i>
<i>VJ</i>	Jonas, <i>Vita Iohannis</i>
<i>VV</i>	Jonas, <i>Vita Vedastis</i>

INTRODUCTION

1 THE WORKS OF JONAS OF BOBBIO

Jonas, who is variously described by historians as ‘of Susa’, from his birthplace, and ‘of Bobbio’, from the monastery where he first became a monk, wrote one of the classics of hagiography, the *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*. Not only is the *Life of Columbanus* a key text in the history of monasticism, it also contains significant material for the more general history of the Frankish world, and indeed was drawn on by the most important chronicle of the first half of the seventh century to be written in Francia, that of Fredegar.¹ In addition, it was a point of reference for a number of other hagiographers writing in the later part of the century.² It is, therefore, of great significance for understanding the middle Merovingian period and its religious developments.

The *Life of Columbanus* is a composite work that deals with the Irish abbot and monastic founder, Columbanus, and his Frankish successors, and the three communities of Bobbio, Luxeuil, and Faremoutiers in the period between the death of the saint in 615 and the time of Jonas’s writing (642/43). Book One concerns the saintly career of Columbanus from his birth in Ireland to his death at Bobbio. It is a conventional narrative account of one of the most remarkable monastic figures of the period and provides a panorama of the monastic and political landscape of much of early medieval Europe in the late sixth and early seventh centuries. It charts Columbanus’s education and monastic formation in Ireland, his departure for the Continent as an ascetic exile, his monastic foundations of Annegray, Luxeuil, and Fontaine in the Vosges forests of Burgundy, his conflict with his royal patrons Queen Brunhild and King Theuderic II, and his subsequent banishment and travels through the royal courts and aristocratic households of Merovingian Gaul to Bregenz in *Alamannia* and

1 Fredegar 4: 36 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 23–29).

2 See section 13, below.

across the Alps to Italy, where he settled at Bobbio. As well as being a work of hagiography, it is a travel itinerary of a journey across Europe.³ Jonas ends Book One with the death of Columbanus: unlike many hagiographers he makes no attempt to provide an account of the saint's *post mortem* miracles – this is clearly a deliberate decision, which is echoed in Jonas's other hagiographical works, which also lack any description of posthumous wonderworking. The monks of Bobbio would have to wait until the tenth century for a record of miracles worked by Columbanus after his death. The late tenth-century *Miracula sancti Columbani*, which in some manuscripts serves as a second book in place of that composed by Jonas, provided additional material both on the saint's short time in Bobbio and also on the miracles worked by his relics.⁴

The second part of Jonas's *Life*, Book Two, is more unconventional in structure as it deals with Columbanus's successors as abbots of Bobbio and Luxeuil, their communities, and the female religious community of Faremoutiers. The first six chapters are concerned with Athala, Columbanus's successor as abbot of Bobbio; chapters 7–10 with Eustasius (d. 629), abbot of Luxeuil; chapters 11–22 deal with Faremoutiers and, in particular, the miraculous deaths and otherworldly experiences that took place there, while chapters 23–25 cover Athala's successor as abbot of Bobbio, Bertulf (d. 639), and a number of Bobbio monks. Book Two is a hagiographical-history of the early period of the Columbanian communities, and can be seen as belonging to a genre known as *gesta abbatum* ('deeds of the abbots'), which included such earlier works as the *Life of the Jura Fathers*, and such later ones as Bede's *History of the Abbots* and the *Deeds of the Abbots of Fontanelle*.⁵

Jonas also wrote one other work of hagiography, probably two, the *Lives* of John of Réomé and of Vedast of Arras, certainly of lesser value for the historian than the *Life of Columbanus*, but, as we shall see, of significance all the same – and fully deserving translation and commentary. A further work which has plausibly been attributed to Jonas, the so-called *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*, the 'Rule of a Certain Man for Virgins' (which is not translated here), adds to the importance of Jonas himself as a monastic authority.⁶

3 Judic, 'La notion d'Europe chez Saint Colomban'.

4 *Miracula sancti Columbani*, ed. and trans. Dubreucq and Zironi; O'Hara and Taylor, 'Aristocratic and Monastic Conflict in Tenth-Century Italy'.

5 Grocock and Wood, *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, p. xxiv.

6 Diem, 'Rewriting Benedict: The *regula cuiusdam ad virgines* and Intertextuality

Yet, while Jonas's work is undoubtedly important, it is not easy, and not just because it was written in difficult Latin. The *Life of Columbanus* is no straightforward account of the career of a monastic founder and his disciples,⁷ nor are the *Lives* of John and Vedast simple histories of an earlier Gallo-Roman (i.e. coming from the indigenous population of Roman or sub-Roman Gaul) monastic founder and a Frankish bishop. Jonas wrote with an agenda, or even a series of agendas, in mind. These need careful disentanglement. The introduction that follows and the notes to the texts attempt that disentanglement. Having provided a brief examination of the political world which Columbanus entered in c.590, we look at what can be said about the Gallic Church in the late sixth and early seventh centuries – as will become apparent, sources other than Jonas present us with a very different picture from that which he paints: their evidence helps us to understand his intentions. Having examined the context in which Columbanus was operating, we briefly consider his career and his legacy, before looking in more detail at Jonas's own life and his work as a hagiographer. Because the text of the *Life of Columbanus* does not survive in its original form, and had to be reconstructed by its most important editor, Bruno Krusch, it is necessary to say something about the earliest manuscripts, as well as the major editions and previous translations. A word is also needed on the chief characteristics of the author's Latin, although this is a subject which requires specialist study, which itself should ideally go hand-in-hand with a new edition of the Latin text.⁸ Having discussed the *Life of Columbanus* at some length, we turn to the two other hagiographical works written by, or ascribed to, Jonas: the *Lives* of John and Vedast, before finally assessing the author's impact on subsequent hagiographical writing.

as Tools to Construct a Monastic Identity'. Diem is preparing a new edition and English translation in the *Disciplina Monastica* series published by Brepols.

7 Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography'; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 350–51; Diem, 'Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity: Jonas of Bobbio and the End of the Holy Man'; Helvétius, 'Hagiographie et réformes monastiques dans le monde franc du VII^e siècle'; O'Hara, 'The *Vita Columbani* in Merovingian Gaul'.

8 Alain Dubreucq is currently preparing a new edition.

2 FRANCIA IN THE DAYS OF COLUMBANUS

Columbanus arrived on the continent in c.590.⁹ At the time of his arrival, Gregory of Tours, who died in 594, was in the final stages of writing his *Histories*, our major source for the Frankish kingdom from its beginnings in the fifth century down to 591.¹⁰ Also alive and active was the Italian poet, hagiographer, and bishop of Poitiers, Venantius Fortunatus.¹¹ Columbanus thus entered a world that is relatively well known to historians. It was dominated by the Merovingian family, three of whom were ruling at the time:¹² Chlothar II held the northern kingdom of Neustria, which was centred on the lower Seine, his cousin Childebert II, whose major cities were Metz, Rheims, and Cologne, was king in the eastern kingdom of Austrasia; the most important figure, however, was their uncle, Guntram, who ruled Burgundy, from its centres at Chalon-sur-Saône and Orléans (see Map 1). As a result of the complex division of Francia between the Merovingians his kingdom included most of the lands on the north bank of the river Loire, a point of some significance when we consider Columbanus's travels in Francia (see Map 2).

Guntram died in 592, or possibly 593,¹³ shortly after Columbanus's move eastwards, and his kingdom passed to Childebert, who, as a result ruled the whole of the Frankish kingdom apart from a stretch of territory in the north, between the Cotentin peninsula and the Scheldt in modern Belgium, which remained in Chlothar's hands. However, Childebert himself died in 596, leaving his kingdom to two sons: Theudebert (II), who inherited most of what his father had held before Guntram's death,

9 The date is determined by *Ep.* II: 6 (*SCO*, p. 17), where he says he has been in the Vosges for twelve years; for the date of the letter, see Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', p. 10 n. 36, pp. 13–14; and *VC* I: 20, where Jonas says that at the time of Columbanus's exile from Luxeuil (c.610) he had been in the wilderness for twenty years.

10 The best edition remains that of Krusch and Levison, Gregory of Tours (*DLH*). Thorpe (*Gregory of Tours, The History of the Franks*) translated the 1886–93 edition of Henri Omont and Gaston Collon, while consulting that of 1885 by Arndt and Krusch, retaining the incorrect title (in *DLH* X: 31, trans. Thorpe, p. 602, Gregory states that he had written *ten Books of Histories, decem libros historiarum*). The chief recommendation of Thorpe's translation is its accessibility.

11 On Fortunatus, see George, *Venantius Fortunatus: A Poet in Merovingian Gaul*.

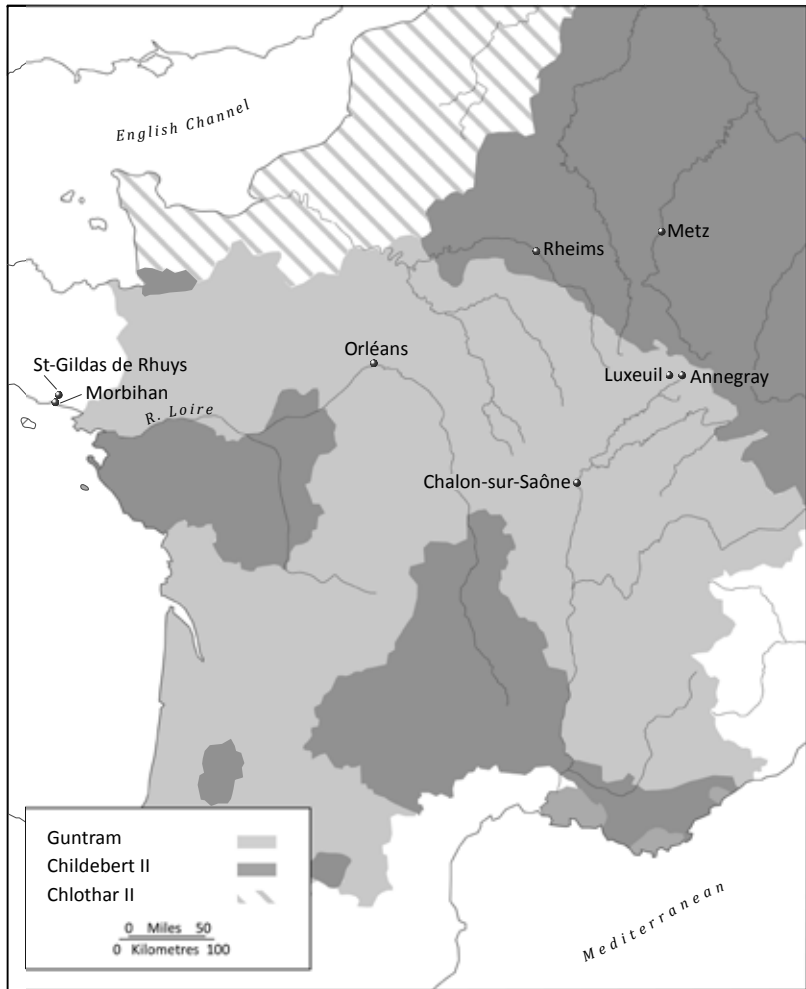
12 For a narrative, see Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 58–70, 120–49.

13 Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, p. 10, opted for 593. Krusch preferred 592, as did Weidemann, 'Zur Chronologie der Merowinger im 6. Jahrhundert', pp. 485–87. There is, however, conflict in the sources.



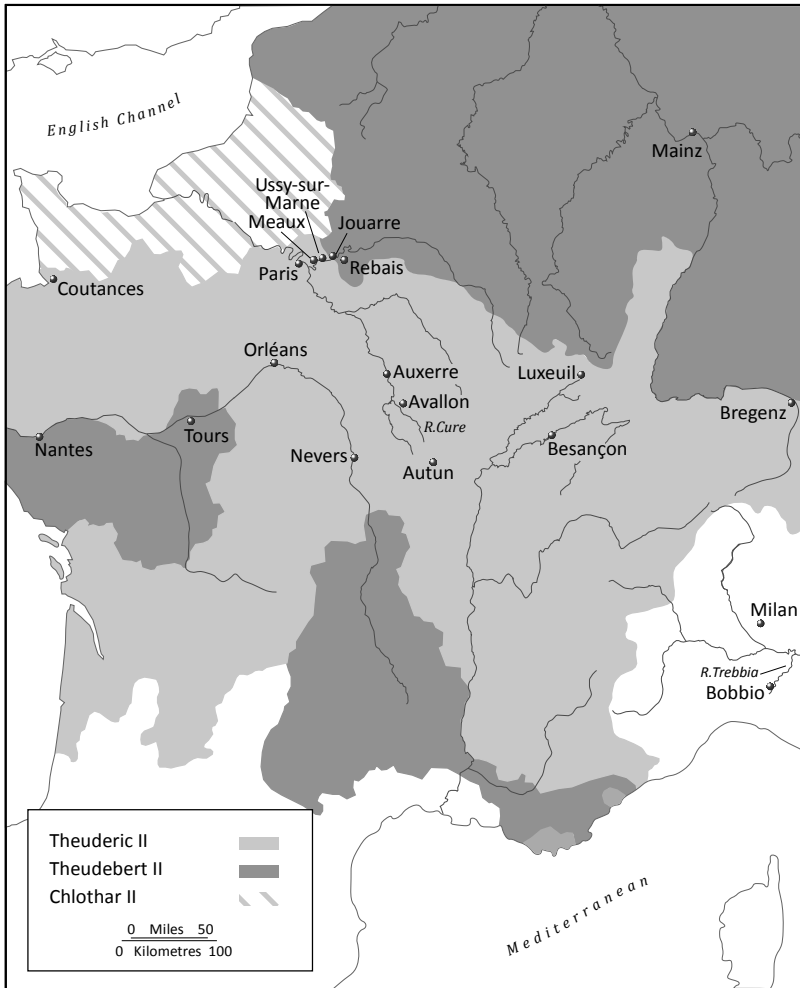
Map 1 Burgundy, c.596–610

The shading marks the boundaries in 596: the boundary line marks recurrent lines of dispute in the late sixth and early seventh centuries (see www.menestrel.fr)



Map 2 Francia, c.590

The Frankish kingdoms at the time of Columbanus's arrival in Gaul
(see www.menestrel.fr)



Map 3 Francia, c.610
 The Frankish kingdoms at the time of Columbanus's exile
 (see www.menestrel.fr)

and his half-brother Theuderic (II), who took over the latter's territory. The Merovingian king with whom Columbanus was most involved was, therefore, Theuderic, although the saint passed through the territories of Chlothar and Theudebert following a failed attempt to send him back to Ireland in 610 (see Map 3). Thereafter, he briefly settled in Bregenz in the far east of Theudebert's kingdom, before the Austrasian king was eliminated by his half-brother. In 612, at about the time of Theuderic's seizure of all the land that had been held by his father, Columbanus moved on to the Lombard kingdom of Italy, where he was granted lands to found a monastery at Bobbio, in the northern Apennines, to the south of Piacenza and Pavia. Theuderic himself died soon after, and Chlothar reunited the whole of the Merovingian kingdom in 613. He asked Columbanus to return to Francia. The Irishman, however, refused, dying at Bobbio in 615.

Jonas provides some valuable information about the conflict between Theuderic and Theudebert, and about the rise of Chlothar in 612/13, but the little that he writes about the situation at the time of Columbanus's arrival in c.590 is incorrect. Despite this, the politics of the period have to be borne in mind – they help explain the geography of Columbanus's travels, and they also provided the context for the monastic developments to which the Irish saint and his disciples contributed, since the enemies of Theuderic, the king responsible for driving Columbanus out of Francia, were in control after 613 – and they would support the Irishman's foundations,¹⁴ perhaps in part because he could be seen as a victim of the previous regime. Equally important was the ecclesiastical context within which Columbanus operated. While Jonas largely ignores the secular politics, he positively misrepresents the religious history of the late sixth and early seventh centuries. Without some awareness of the actual state of affairs, it is impossible to assess either Columbanus's real impact, or Jonas's intentions.

14 Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*.

3 THE GALLIC CHURCH OF THE LATE SIXTH CENTURY

At the time of Columbanus's arrival in Gaul, according to Jonas, 'whether due to the numerous foreign enemies or through the negligence of the bishops, the fervour of the religious life had almost been extinguished there.'¹⁵ This description is often taken at face value, and it is not difficult to see why. The fourth and fifth centuries had seen the completion of the Christianization of Gaul (and of Italy), as well as a Golden Age of monasticism, deriving from the foundations of Martin of Tours and that of Honoratus of Lérins.¹⁶ The ecclesiastical history of the sixth century is by no means as dynamic. Ages of foundation tend to attract attention in a way that subsequent decades do not. In addition, the late sixth century sees a caesura in our source material. Gregory of Tours, whose historical and hagiographical works are central to any reading of the sixth century, died in 594; his friend Venantius Fortunatus died in the first decade of the seventh century. Moreover, Gregory's vision was one of an increasingly troubled world,¹⁷ which in many ways chimes with the image presented by Jonas. As a result, despite the wealth of ecclesiastical information in Gregory's writings, above all in his hagiography, and indeed despite the evidence of the canons of the sixth-century Merovingian Church and their initial collection around the year 600, which reveals a remarkable concern for ecclesiastical legislation,¹⁸ historians have tended to emphasize the brutality of the period, rather than its spirituality. As Gregory saw it, his own day was dominated by civil wars (*bella civilia*), and that is the dominant image for historians. The seventh century would turn out to be equally brutal, but in religious terms at least Columbanus could be seen as marking a new start.

This is not entirely fair on the late sixth and early seventh centuries, as we can see both from the production of religious texts and also from the history of monasticism. To set Jonas within a proper perspective it is worth stressing the composition of hagiography before and during the period in which he was writing. A reasonable point of departure is a work written to augment the *Life of Radegund* written by Venantius Fortunatus. The ascetic queen Radegund had founded the nunnery of the Holy Cross

15 VCI: 5.

16 Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, pp. 1–117.

17 Gregory of Tours, *DLH V*: praef. (trans. Thorpe, pp. 253–54).

18 Pontal, *Die Synoden im Merowingerreich*; Mordek, *Kirchenrecht und Reform im Frankenreich*.

in Poitiers in 552. Although it had undergone a period of crisis, recorded by Gregory of Tours,¹⁹ it seems to have recovered. In the early seventh century, one of its inmates, the nun Baudonivia, wrote an account of the foundress, to add to that written by Fortunatus.²⁰ So, too, in the southern city of Arles the nunnery founded by Caesarius in the early sixth century, which was the model for the convent of the Holy Cross, seems to have been flourishing, to judge by the *Life* of its abbess, Rusticula, written by Florentius shortly after 632/33,²¹ that is a mere decade before Jonas wrote the *Life of Columbanus*. Both communities may have influenced the Columbanian nunnery of Faremoutiers.

With the *Life of Rusticula*, however, we meet a factor which has helped to support the impression of religious decadence presented by Jonas in the *Life of Columbanus*. Bruno Krusch, who edited the text, condemned it, like many Merovingian works of hagiography, as a later forgery, and although this was questioned almost immediately, it was not until 1954 that the *Life* was fully vindicated, by which time it had more or less been excluded from assessments of the Merovingian Church.²² There are, in fact, a significant number of hagiographical texts belonging to the late sixth and early seventh centuries, suggesting a very much more vibrant religious culture than Jonas implies. Some of them, like the *Life of Rusticula* and that of bishop Desiderius of Vienne (a work that deals with a martyr who is acknowledged by Jonas),²³ relate to contemporaries of Columbanus. From northern Francia we have the first *Life* of Gaugerici (Géry), probably written in the decade after 639, at almost exactly the same time as Jonas wrote the *Life of Columbanus*.²⁴ The *Life of*

19 Gregory of Tours, *DLH* X: 15–17 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 567–75).

20 Venantius Fortunatus and Baudonivia, *Vitae Radegundis*, ed. Krusch, MGH, *SRM* II.

21 *Vita Rusticulae*, ed. Krusch, MGH, *SRM* IV.

22 Riché, 'Note d'hagiographie mérovingienne: La *Vita Rusticulae*'; Van Uytenghe, 'Le saveur biblique du Latin mérovingien: l'exemple de la vie de sainte Rusticule, abbesse à Arles (VII^e siècle)'.

23 *VC* I: 27. Although Krusch thought that Jonas was following the *Vita Desiderii* written by the Visigothic king Sisebut (ed. Krusch, MGH, *SRM*, III), it is possible that he actually had access to the anonymous *Passio Desiderii* (ed. Krusch, MGH, *SRM*, III). See Martín-Iglesias, 'Un ejemplo de influencia de la *Vita Desiderii* de Sisebuto en la hagiografía mérovingia'; Godding, *Prêtres en Gaule mérovingienne*, p. xxvii, accepts a seventh-century date for the *Passio*.

24 *Vita Gaugerici*, ed. Krusch, MGH, *SRM*, III. For the date, see Mériaux, 'Une *Vita* mérovingienne et ses lectures du IX^e au XI^e siècle: Le dossier de saint Géry de Cambrai', p. 170.

Gaugericus may be of some significance when we come to consider that of Vedast, ascribed to Jonas.

Other hagiographical works of the late sixth and early seventh centuries describe a more distant past. Wolfert van Egmond has recently drawn attention to the extraordinary outpouring of hagiography from Auxerre in and after the episcopate of Aunacharius (561/73–605/14).²⁵ From Langres, rather closer to Luxeuil, and a city whose bishop appears in Jonas's writings, we have the *Passion of the Holy Triplets*, *Speusippus*, *Eleusippus* and *Melusippus*, addressed to Ceraunius of Paris around 610/14, as well as the same author's *Passion* of bishop Desiderius of Langres (not to be confused with Columbanus's contemporary, Desiderius of Vienne), supposedly killed by the Vandals.²⁶

If we turn from hagiography to Jonas's presentation of Columbanus as reviving a near-moribund state of religion, by which he largely meant monasticism, we can see that this is too bleak an assessment. Jonas himself acknowledged the existence of a British monastic community, led by Carantoc, in the Vosges, at the time of Columbanus's arrival.²⁷ Carantoc's monastery is a complete mystery, but we can guess that it was an outpost of the British monastic movement in Western Gaul, which probably included communities established by Gildas and Paul Aurelian, and certainly by Samson. The last was undoubtedly influential in Merovingian circles. His hagiography associates him primarily with Dol, near St-Malo on the Breton border,²⁸ but in the mid-sixth century he would seem to have been closer to the centre of the Frankish world, with strong contacts with the Neustrian court. His main monastery was apparently that at Pentale on the lower Seine,²⁹ which would be eclipsed in the later seventh century by Jumièges and St-Wandrille, foundations of disciples of Columbanus. Probably more important for the Irish saint was Gildas. Certainly,

25 Van Egmond, *Conversing with the Saints: Communication in Pre-Carolingian Hagiography from Auxerre*.

26 *Passio sanctorum Geminorum Speusippi, Eleusippi et Melusippi*, PL 80, cols 185–196; *Passio Desiderii episcopi Lingonensis*, PL 80, cols 195–200; J.-C. Picard, 'Langres', p. 48.

27 Jonas, *VC* I: 7.

28 *Vita Samsonis*, ed. Flobert, *La vie ancienne de saint Samson de Dol*. The Carolingian date proposed by Flobert is almost certainly too late for the original composition of the text; Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons: 350–1064*, pp. 66, 239 n. 58.

29 On Pentale, see Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, pp. 66–67. See also Le Maho, 'Ermitages et monastères bretons dans la province de Rouen au haut Moyen Âge (VI^e–IX^e siècle)'.

Columbanus knew and admired his works.³⁰ Although we cannot be sure that Gildas left Britain for Brittany, the traditions that associate him with St-Gildas de Rhuys, near the mouth of the Loire, are strong,³¹ and it may well be that Columbanus visited the British saint's resting place³² before travelling to the Merovingian court. One might guess that Carantoc and members of his community had come from one of the British centres in Brittany.

More important for Columbanian monasticism in the long term was the influence of Provence. It is often assumed that the great island monastery of Lérins, situated opposite Cannes, was in decline by the late sixth century, and the fact that Columbanus's disciple Athala left it to join the Irish saint has been held to prove as much.³³ Yet Jonas's denigration of Lérins at the time of Athala's visit may be no more than a way of excusing the monk's move, which might otherwise have seemed to be an act of monastic disobedience.³⁴ Certainly there were problems at Lérins in the late seventh century, which culminated in the murder of Abbot Aigulf³⁵ – although even then one might note that Benedict Biscop, founder of the great Northumbrian monastery of Wearmouth, was a monk on the island-monastery at almost exactly the time of the murder.³⁶

There is no doubt, however, that Lérins was flourishing in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, when it boasted a string of notable inmates and visitors.³⁷ At the same time, a number of monastic rules seem to have been composed in its orbit, as has been argued by Adalbert de Vogüé.³⁸

30 Columbanus, *Ep.* I: 6, 7 (*SCO*, pp. 8–9).

31 Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, pp. 3–4, 26.

32 The Morbihan was probably part of the *Britannicus sinus* mentioned in *VC* I: 4, 5, 21. See Wood, 'Columbanus in Brittany'.

33 *VC* II: 1. Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 21.

34 On evil abbots as a justification for a monk to move to another monastery, see Gildas, fragment 4, ed. and trans. Winterbottom, pp. 81, 144.

35 *Vita Aigulfi*, *AASS*, September, I, pp. 743–55.

36 Bede, *Historia Abbatum* 3, ed. Grocock and Wood, *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. 26–27, with n. 22.

37 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 21 n. 98 notes, among other references, Ennodius, *Vita Antonii* 36–42; *Vita Arnulfi* 6; *Vita Caesarii* II: 5; Ennodius, *Vita Epiphani* 93; *Vita Hilarii* II: 7; Pseudo-Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Leobini* 4; *Vita Lupi Trecensis* 2; Dynamius, *Vita Maximi* 3; *Vita Patrum Iurensium* 174; *Vita Theudarii* 2. See also, Dubreucq, 'Lérins et la Bourgondie dans le haut Moyen Âge', p. 205.

38 De Vogüé, ed., *Les règles des saints Pères*. See also Weiss, 'Lérins et la "Règle des Quatre Pères"'. For doubts about the localisation of the text, however, see Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, pp. 85–90.

In particular, there is a case for associating the *Regula Macharii*³⁹ with Abbot Porcarius, who is also known as the author of a short pastoral work, the *Monita* ('Admonitions').⁴⁰ Although the evidence for the later sixth and seventh centuries is certainly weaker than that for the previous century, the aristocrat Dynamius praised Lérins,⁴¹ and Gregory the Great did so too.⁴² And although most of the hagiography relating to the island's early abbots was written in the fifth century, that of Caprasius has been dated to the seventh.⁴³ Thus, although Athala did not stay long at Lérins, the island could still boast a flourishing monastery at the time of Columbanus's arrival in Gaul.

Yet, while Lérins remained a centre of influence at the time of Columbanus's arrival, it was probably less important for the Irish saint and his followers than was Arles. Arles features less prominently in modern studies of Gallic Christianity than Lérins, in part because some of the religious output of its greatest ecclesiastic, bishop Caesarius, was not identified until the twentieth century (although not all the sermons attributed to him can be regarded securely as his). Thus, Krusch identified no citations of the bishop of Arles' writings in his edition of Jonas's works, although it is clear that they abound. Even one of the phrases most closely associated with Jonas, *medicamenta paenitentiae* ('the medicines of penance'), is actually a key phrase for Caesarius.⁴⁴ Despite an important nineteenth-century biography by Malnory,⁴⁵ only in recent years has the bishop of Arles been given anything like his due, as a pastoral bishop, as

39 We leave the title of the work in Latin, to avoid problems when talking about different works ascribed to Macharius.

40 de Vogüé, *Les règles des saints pères*, 1, pp. 372–89; Delcogliano, 'Porcarius of Lérins and his Counsels: A Monastic Study I', pp. 418–25. Porcarius, *Monita*, *PL*, Supplementum III, pp. 738–39.

41 Dynamius, *Laus de Lerine insula*, ed. Dumézil, 'Le patrice Dynamius et son réseau', pp. 191–92.

42 Gregory I, *Register* VI: 57, but see also XI: 9. See Dumézil, 'Le patrice Dynamius et son réseau', pp. 186–88.

43 *Vita Caprasii*, *AASS*, June, I, pp. 78–79; Godding, *Prêtres en Gaule mérovingienne*, p. xxvi.

44 Caesarius, *Sermones*, 5 (4), p. 28: 22 (5), p. 102: 48 (2), p. 217: 56 (2), p. 249: 57 (4, 5), p. 254: 64 (1, 4), pp. 275, 277–78: 65 (1, 4), pp. 279, 281: 66 (3), p. 284: 79 (3), pp. 327–28: 89 (5), p. 369: 91 (6), p. 377: 101 (6), p. 419: 108 (4), p. 449: 109 (3), p. 453: 116 (7), p. 486: 119 (3), p. 498: 143 (1), p. 588: 178 (4), p. 723: 179 (5), p. 727: 184 (6), p. 751: 187 (4), p. 765: 209 (1), p. 835: 219 (3), p. 870: 235 (5), p. 939.

45 Malnory, *Saint Césaire, évêque d'Arles: 503–543*.

a metropolitan, who was responsible for the summoning of a number of extremely important Church councils, and as a monastic founder.⁴⁶

Caesarius's *Rule* for his house for nuns in Arles would become a central text for Columbanus's disciples as they developed their own *regulae mixtae* (mixed rules: that is compilations made from earlier regular texts) in the later seventh century.⁴⁷ Apart from anything else it laid down a pattern of strict enclosure, which may have influenced Columbanus – although this may also have been similar to what the saint had experienced in Ireland. In Jonas's narrative, the monastic *septa* ('enclosure'), which is, in fact, more important for the nunnery of Faremoutiers than for the male houses of Luxeuil and Bobbio,⁴⁸ may reflect the influence of Caesarius's foundation in Arles at least as much as Columbanus's own commands. Indeed, the idea of strict enclosure (though not the use of the phrase *septa monasterii* ('monastic enclosure')) can be traced from Caesarius,⁴⁹ through a sequence of sixth-century Gallic rules.⁵⁰ It was enforced at Radegund's nunnery of the Holy Cross in Poitiers, which strove to follow Caesarius's *Rule*, and where the term *septa* is used in the 580s.⁵¹ In fact, the term *septa* can be found in the canons of the Gallic church from the fifth century onwards.⁵² Thus, when it appears in Jonas's *Life* of the Gallo-Roman saint John,⁵³

46 Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul*. See also Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: Life, Testament, Letters*.

47 Caesarius, *Regula ad virgines*, ed. de Vogüé and Courreau; trans. McCarthy, *The Rule for Nuns of St Caesarius of Arles*. On the Columbanian Rules, see Diem, *Das Monastische Experiment*, pp. 249–72; Diem, 'Columbanian Monastic Rules: Dissent and Experiment'.

48 Luxeuil: *VC* I: 1, 19, 20; Bobbio: II: 5; Faremoutiers, II: 13, 17, 19; Remiremont: 2: 10. Fredegar IV: 36 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 26) follows Jonas's reference to the *septa secretiora* at Luxeuil. For subsequent use of the term in Merovingian texts, see *Life of Germanus of Grandval* 6, ed. Krusch, p. 36; *Life of Gertrude* 3, trans. Fouracre and Gerberding, p. 322.

49 Caesarius, *Regula ad Virgines*, 50, ed. de Vogüé, pp. 236–37. The term *septa* is present in *Vita Rusticulae* 3, 5, ed. Krusch, pp. 341–42, which describes the same nunnery.

50 de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 138 n. 8 notes that the *Rule* of Columbanus makes no mention of the exclusion of laity, whereas laymen are excluded entirely from the monastery in Caesarius, *Regula ad Virgines* (36), *Regula Aureliani* (14), *Regula Tarnatensis* (20, 1), the Third *Regula Patrum* (4), and the *Regula Ferreoli* (4, 1). Of these, however, only the *Regula Aureliani* relates to male houses rather than nunneries.

51 Gregory of Tours, *DLH* IX: 41 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 533–34). Also associated with the circle of the Holy Cross in Poitiers, Venantius Fortunatus uses the word *saepta* in *Vita Albini* VI: 17, ed. Krusch, p. 29.

52 Cf. the canons of the councils of Vannes (461/91), c. 7, and Agde (506), c. 38, ed. Munier, *Concilia Galliae*, pp. 153, 209; and in those of Tours (567), c. 16, and Paris (614), c. 14, ed. Basdevant, *Les canons des conciles*, pp. 362–63, 516–17.

53 *VJ* 3, 4, 17.

although one might think that the hagiographer was applying Columbanian standards to an early sixth-century foundation,⁵⁴ it is more likely that the founder had derived his views of enclosure from his visit to Lérins.⁵⁵ John, one might add, was only one of a cluster of monastic founders active in the diocese of Langres in the first half of the sixth century.⁵⁶

In other words, Jonas's picture of spiritual collapse at the time of Columbanus's arrival is not supported by other hagiographical and regular evidence. It is certainly true that there had been few monastic foundations in the north-east of Francia,⁵⁷ and in that sense Columbanus was breaking relatively new (though not totally virgin) ground, but he was scarcely coming to a kingdom where religion was in a state of torpor. And if we turn away from strictly monastic issues, while it is true that Columbanus came into conflict with the bishops of Burgundy, and that some of the practices that he followed were out of step with theirs, that is scarcely enough to condemn the Frankish Church of the late sixth century. Moreover, at least one of his opponents, the bishop of Lyon, has been recognized in recent years as possibly playing a major role in the development of canon law.⁵⁸

Our current knowledge of the Gallic Church means that it is no longer possible to see Columbanus's impact on Francia in the light of Jonas's statement concerning the state of religion in Gaul at the time of his arrival. The question of his relation to the Gallic Church is thus more complex than used to be thought. Whereas older scholarship stressed the ways in which Columbanus differed from the late sixth-century Frankish Church, recent work has pointed to his dependence on Gallic tradition. His own writings (like those of Jonas) show a knowledge of Caesarius, and even of the south Burgundian homily collection known under the title of Eusebius

54 See the argument put forward by Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul'. See section 11, below for a modification of Diem's reading of the *Life of John*.

55 It is possible that there is additional evidence for the *septa* at Réomé before Jonas's day. As GB points out, the term appears in a letter of Florianus of Romenum, *Epistolae Austrasicae* 5, 8, ed. Gundlach, p. 117. Some have identified the monastery as Réomé. The monastery is, however, more usually understood to be Italian, and for the use of the term *saepa* in Italy, one has the evidence of Cassiodorus, *Institutes* I: 32, 1 (trans. Halporn and Vessey, p. 166).

56 See Gregory of Tours, *LGC* 85–86 (trans. Van Dam, pp. 91–92). See Wood, 'Prelude to Columbanus: The Monastic Achievement in the Burgundian Territories', pp. 12–14.

57 See Atsma, 'Les monastères urbains du Nord de la Gaule', esp. at p. 168, and Prinz, 'Columbanus, the Frankish Nobility and the Territories East of the Rhine'.

58 Mordek, *Kirchenrecht und Reform im Frankenreich*, pp. 62–82; Stancliffe, 'Columbanus and the Gallic Bishops', p. 211.

Gallicanus.⁵⁹ Perhaps the great insoluble question is whether Columbanus had become acquainted with the Provençal and Burgundian traditions before leaving Ireland, or whether he discovered them when settled on the edge of the Vosges. Certainly, he would seem to have been acquainted with the writings of Venantius Fortunatus while still living in Bangor.⁶⁰ Either way, it is necessary to set Columbanus within the traditions of the sixth-century Gallic Church as much as in opposition to it.

4 COLUMBANUS AND HIS ASCETIC EXILE TO THE CONTINENT

Columbanus died on 23 November 615 in Bobbio, the monastery he had recently established in the foothills of the Apennine mountains of northern Italy.⁶¹ His death marked the culmination of a journey he had embarked upon some twenty-five years before, when he had set sail from Ireland with a small group of monks. Comgall, his abbot, had given him permission to leave his monastery at Bangor (Co. Down) on the north-east coast of Ireland so that he could live the rest of his monastic life as an ascetic exile abroad.⁶² The ritual of ascetic exile (*peregrinatio* – literally ‘travelling abroad’ and, subsequently, by extension ‘pilgrimage’) was a serious commitment whereby the monk chose to forego the security of his monastery and the social bonds of his homeland by entrusting

⁵⁹ Stancliffe, ‘The Thirteen Sermons Attributed to Columbanus and the Question of their Authorship’; Stancliffe, ‘Columbanus’s Monasticism and the Sources of its Inspiration: From Basil to the Master?’, pp. 22–23 and 27; Stevenson, ‘The Monastic Rules of Columbanus’, pp. 209, 210, 213.

⁶⁰ Lapidge, ‘“*Precamur patrem*”: An Easter Hymn by Columbanus?’, p. 262; Stevenson, ‘Irish Hymns, Venantius Fortunatus and Poitiers’.

⁶¹ One MS of the *VC* gives the date of his death as 21 November, which is the date that was accepted by Mabillon. Krusch’s preference for 23 November has been more generally accepted. Jonas notes that Columbanus spent a year helping establish the new monastery before he died: *VC* I: 30. He mentions nothing of the charter of foundation issued by King Agilulf in Milan tentatively dated to 24 July 613. On the foundation and history of Bobbio, see Richter, *Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages: The Abiding Legacy of Columbanus*; Zironi, *Il monastero longobardo di Bobbio*; Destefanis, *Il monastero di Bobbio in età altomedievale*.

⁶² *VC* I: 4. For an extended discussion of Columbanus’s career, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 344–90. The earliest Irish evidence for Comgall is probably to be found in the *Life of Lugaid* (or Molua) 15, 48 (ed. Heist), and in that of Fintan of Clonenagh 12 (ed. Heist); there is also a reference in Adomnán’s *Life of Columba* I: 49: see the note in Sharpe’s translation, pp. 314–15. See also Bullough, ‘The Career of Columbanus’, pp. 7–8.

himself completely to God.⁶³ For Columbanus, it marked a new step in his monastic vocation.

By the time Columbanus left Ireland he was already an exile of sorts within his own country.⁶⁴ He had been born and raised in Leinster, a region in the east and south-east of Ireland, sometime in the middle of the sixth century.⁶⁵ Little is known about his family or social background, although he may have belonged to the *Uí Bairrche*, whose power base was in Leinster and who had connections with Bangor, the monastery in which Columbanus entered as a monk (Map 4). The *Uí Bairrche* king, Cormac mac Diarmata, who ruled for most of the second half of the sixth century, retired to the monastery of Bangor.⁶⁶ The fact that Jonas mentions Columbanus receiving some schooling when still at home, but that he was not sent away for fosterage – common for the sons of nobles at the time – suggests that his family were from the landowning middle stratum of society. They may also have been first-generation Christian, as the spread of Christianity in Ireland began essentially in the mid-fifth century.⁶⁷ Following his conversion to the religious life, Columbanus left his native region for Ulster in northern Ireland, where he received biblical instruction under a certain Sinilis, a scriptural scholar. It is not sure whether this refers to Sinilis abbot of Cluain Inis (Cleenish) in Co. Fermanagh or to a man of the same name who was also known for his learning, and later became abbot of Bangor.⁶⁸ Jonas notes that during this period of scriptural study Columbanus wrote a commentary

63 On the concept of *peregrinatio* as understood by the Irish, see Charles-Edwards, 'The Social Background to Irish *peregrinatio*'; Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom'. On Columbanus's self-identification as an ascetic exile, see O'Hara, '*Patria, peregrinatio, and paenitentia: Identities of Alienation in the Seventh Century*'.

64 The Irish distinguished between two levels of *peregrinatio* – one when you left your native region and the other, *potior peregrinatio* ('greater ascetic exile') when you left your country. Jonas is aware of these two levels in his story of Columbanus's meeting with the female anchorite in Ireland who encourages Columbanus to undertake *potior peregrinatio*: *VC I*: 3.

65 Jonas notes Columbanus's origin in Leinster (*Lagenorum terra*) in *VC I*: 3. On the dating of Columbanus's birth to around 550, see Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', pp. 2–3.

66 Ó Cróinín, 'Ireland, 400–800', pp. 193–94.

67 As noted by Jonas: *VC I*: 2. For Columbanus's early education, see *VC I*: 3, on which see Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', p. 3.

68 *VC I*: 3. This Sinilis has traditionally been identified as Sinell son of Mianiach who had a reputation for learning and was abbot of Cleenish in the later sixth century. The monastic site at Cleenish has recently been surveyed and an enclosure identified. However, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has argued that this Sinilis refers to the abbot of Bangor of the same name whose



Map 4 Ireland in the Days of Columbanus

on the Psalms which no longer survives. Afterwards, he formally entered the monastic life at Bangor where he received his formation under the strict abbot and founder, Comgall (d. 602).⁶⁹ Columbanus may have been in charge of the monastic school there – he was certainly knowledgeable in the specialist field of *computus*, the science of calculating the days on which liturgical feasts were to be held.⁷⁰ It is not certain for how long Columbanus remained in Bangor – possibly for as many as twenty years, as only experienced monks were given permission to undertake ascetic exile. He was probably in his forties when he left Ireland, despite Jonas's assertion that he was aged only twenty, a statement that appears to have been modelled on the *Life of Antony* by Athanasius of Alexandria.⁷¹ To underline the apostolic nature of Columbanus's mission, Comgall entrusted him with twelve of his fellow monks whom he was to lead as their new abbot. The monks do not appear to have had any ultimate destination in mind when they set sail from Ireland in 590 or 591.⁷²

As exiles in a new and foreign environment, Columbanus and his monks had to operate through established networks of power. By leaving Ireland, perhaps surprisingly, Columbanus's status had risen to the level of a regional king or bishop, according to Irish law. It was the duty of a king to provide hospitality and protection for an ascetic exile.⁷³ It is, however, doubtful whether Columbanus and his monks would have received any such support when they first arrived on the continent. They landed in Brittany – Jonas gives no indication of whereabouts, but his references to the *Brittanica arva* ('British/Breton region') and the *sinus Brittanicus* ('British/Breton bay') seem all to concern the Loire mouth and the Morbihan, although, according to more recent tradition, the saint's original landfall was near St-Coulomb, on the north coast.⁷⁴ We

death is recorded in the Annals of Ulster *s.a.* 610: 'Mo Sinnu moccu Min and the Computus of Bangor'.

69 *VC* I: 4. For Comgall, see n. 62, above.

70 On Columbanus as teacher at Bangor, Wettli, *Vita Galli* 1. See also, Ó Cróinín, 'Mo Sinnu moccu Min and the Computus of Bangor'.

71 *VC* I: 4, on which, see notes *ad loc.*

72 *VC* I: 4. On the dating, see Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', p. 10.

73 O'Hara, '*Patris, peregrinatio, and paenitentia*', p. 98; Charles-Edwards, 'The Social Background to Irish *peregrinatio*', p. 53, with further references.

74 *VC* I: 4, 5, 20, 21. The reason for stressing the Morbihan rather than Saint-Coulomb, near Saint-Malo, with which later tradition associates him, is the fact that Jonas uses exactly the same phrases to describe his initial arrival (*VC* I: 4–5: *Brittanicos sinos, Britannicis sinibus*) ('British/Breton bays') as he does to describe the mouth of the Loire, which was

know a little about the Morbihan at this time from Gregory of Tours's comments on the activities of the independently minded *comes* Waroch, who was responsible for a fair amount of disruption in the territories of Vannes, Nantes, and Rennes.⁷⁵ It may be that Columbanus was attracted to the more southerly region since it was where the British ascetic Gildas, whom the Irishman revered,⁷⁶ retired, at least according to later tradition.⁷⁷ Columbanus may even have spent some time there, before he and his companions decided to continue overland into the heartland of Merovingian Gaul.⁷⁸

They headed to the court of a king called Sigibert in most manuscripts of the *Life of Columbanus*, although the second oldest (that from Metz) has the name of his son Hyldebert, or Childebert (II). Sigibert was most definitely not king at the time that Columbanus entered Francia, since he was murdered in 575.⁷⁹ On the other hand, Childebert, who died in 596, did come into contact with the Irish saint, and may well have granted the site of Luxeuil to him. However, he only took over the region in which Columbanus settled after the death of his uncle Guntram, in 592/93.⁸⁰ Since Columbanus is thought to have entered the Merovingian kingdom in 590,⁸¹ it is probable that he went initially to the latter's Burgundian court. Why Jonas fails to name Guntram is a mystery, although it is possible that the grant of Luxeuil was so much more significant than that of Annegray, Columbanus's first monastery, that the name of the Irish saint's original royal patron was simply forgotten. Certainly, the speed of political change must have been bewildering. The role of Childebert is, however, recognized in the late seventh-century *Life of Sadalberga*, which does name him as ruler at the time of Columbanus's arrival, as does the later *Life of Agilus*.⁸²

It is not difficult to infer why Jonas changed the name of Childebert into that of his father. Sigibert's wife, Brunhild, and her grandson Theuderic (II)

meant to be his point of departure for Ireland (*VC* I: 21: *Brittanicoque sinu redderetur*: 'that he might be returned to the British/Breton bay'). See Wood, 'Columbanus, the Britons and the Merovingian Church'.

⁷⁵ Wood, 'Columbanus in Brittany'.

⁷⁶ Columbanus, *Ep.* I: 6–7 (*SCO*, pp. 8–9).

⁷⁷ Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, p. 26.

⁷⁸ *VC* I: 5 and see n.

⁷⁹ Gregory of Tours, *DLH* IV: 51 (trans. Thorpe, p. 248).

⁸⁰ Fredegair IV: 14 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 10).

⁸¹ See n. 9, above on the evidence of Columbanus, *Ep.* II: 6 (*SCO*, p. 17), and *VC* I: 20.

⁸² *Life of Sadalberga* 1 (trans. McNamara, p. 180); *Life of Agilus* 3.

are the villains of the *Life of Columbanus*. They were also the subject of a *damnatio memoriae* after their deaths in 613.⁸³ The same is not true of Sigibert, whose legitimacy, unlike that of his descendants, is acknowledged by the Edict of Paris, issued in 614 by Chlothar II. By naming Sigibert, Jonas could suggest that Columbanus was not dependent on Brunhild or her son or grandson.⁸⁴

It is likely that Columbanus and his followers went to the court of Guntram, the Merovingian ruler of Burgundy, because the particular division of power in Francia meant that he was the dominant figure on the lower Loire (Map 2). Gregory of Tours may even provide us with a context for Columbanus's move.⁸⁵ In his account of the year 590 he records that the Britons led by Waroch and his son Canao were threatening the countryside between Nantes and Rennes. Guntram sent an army to deal with them, led by Beppolen and Ebrachar. Initially Ebrachar avoided fighting, because he had a grudge against Beppolen, as did Fredegund, who sent a force of disguised Saxons to support the Britons. After Beppolen had been killed, however, Ebrachar marched to Vannes, apparently to try to stop Waroch from transferring to the islands off the coast of the Morbihan. The British leader was unable to escape, because of a storm, and swore to be subject to Guntram, sending his nephew as a hostage, while bishop Regalis explained that he had had no option but to do as the Britons told him. Ebrachar subsequently returned to Guntram's court, although Waroch soon broke his oath. Since Columbanus seems to have been in the region of the Morbihan at exactly the time that these events were happening, one has to ask whether Ebrachar's expedition to Vannes lay behind the saint's move to Burgundy. Did he leave as part of the group of hostages sent by Waroch, along with his nephew, or did he take advantage of the presence of a Frankish army to make himself known to members of Guntram's court? And there is a further peculiarity: in the very next chapter of the *Histories* Gregory records an episode involving the illegal killing of an aurochs by the king's chamberlain (*cubicularius*), Chundo, in the royal forest of the Vosges. The tale culminates in the execution of Chundo, and the regret of Guntram.⁸⁶ Was the establishment of Annegray in some way an act of penance on the part of the king?

83 See Wood, 'Jonas, the Merovingians, and Pope Honorius', pp. 105–06, 109–13.

84 Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 196.

85 Gregory of Tours, *DLH* X 9 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 556–58).

86 Gregory of Tours, *DLH* X 10 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 558–59).

Certainly Guntram must have given Columbanus and his followers permission to settle within his territories.⁸⁷ With the support, as it seems, first of Guntram and then of Childebert, Columbanus established three monastic communities in quick succession during the course of the 590s, at Annegray, Luxeuil, and Fontaine, all within a few miles of each another.⁸⁸ Annegray was in all probability part of the royal fisc: certainly it was in a region where there were Merovingian hunting-reserves, as one can see from Gregory of Tours's account of Chundo's crime, which occurred close in time to Columbanus's arrival.⁸⁹ Luxeuil, would seem from the excavations conducted by Sébastien Bully, to have been a small urban community and ecclesiastical centre, and not the deserted landscape described by Jonas.⁹⁰ It may also be significant that Luxeuil, like Columbanus's later centres of Bregenz and Bobbio, was a site of thermal springs (see Map 5).

The patronage of the Merovingian dynasty facilitated the initial success of these communities. New recruits joined, and Frankish noble families sent their sons to be educated there.⁹¹ Columbanus appears to have served as a spiritual advisor to the young Childebert, and then to his even younger son, Theuderic II.⁹² Tensions arose, however, when Columbanus interfered with the uneasy balance of power at court. He encouraged the teenage Theuderic to marry and produce legitimate children instead of conducting polygamous relationships. This jeopardized the leading position of Theuderic's grandmother, the dowager queen Brunhild, who felt threatened should Theuderic marry. Columbanus lost the support of his royal patrons when he refused to bless the king's illegitimate children.⁹³

In addition, Columbanus came into conflict with the Gallic bishops,

87 *VC* I: 6. On Jonas's confusion over Sigibert I, Guntram and Childebert II, see the discussion above.

88 On the monastic foundations, see Wood, 'Jonas, the Merovingians, and Pope Honorius: *Diplomata* and the *Vita Columbani*'; O'Hara, 'Columbanus *ad locum*: The Establishment of the Monastic Foundations'.

89 Gregory of Tours, *DLH* X: 10 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 558–59). Annegray is generally thought to have been a Roman routeway fort of the Late Empire, as such forts were constructed near the *limes* to guard the roads. See O'Hara, 'Columbanus *ad locum*: The Establishment of the Monastic Foundations'.

90 Bully, *et al.*, 'Les origines du monastère de Luxeuil (Haute-Saône) d'après les récentes recherches archéologiques'.

91 *VC* I: 10.

92 *VC* I: 18.

93 *VC* I: 18–19. On the dowager queen Brunhild and the historical context, see Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History'; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 356–63; Dumézil, *La Reine Brunehaut*.



Map 5 Luxeuil and its Environs

because he did not acknowledge that his monasteries should be under the authority of the local diocesan.⁹⁴ From his perspective he was an ascetic exile and thus outside their jurisdiction.⁹⁵ He also accused some of them of having bought their office and having adulterous affairs with women.⁹⁶ In addition, he continued to celebrate Easter following Anatolius of Laodicea's calculation of the date of this moveable feast, which was still current in Ireland, but which had been replaced by that of Victorius of Aquitaine in Gaul.⁹⁷ This meant that in some years Columbanus and his communities celebrated Easter on a different day from that accepted by the local Frankish churches, and thus were open to the charge of schism.⁹⁸ This was an issue of contention right from the beginning of his period in the region. Columbanus wrote directly to Pope Gregory the Great and to his successor to appeal for their intervention in his disputes with the Frankish episcopate. He pleaded for tolerance and the right to practise his own traditions. However, when he was summoned to appear in council before the bishops at the Synod of Châlon in 603, he refused, and instead wrote a forthright letter rebutting their accusations and appealing directly to Scripture.⁹⁹

Initially the episcopal opposition did not damage Columbanus's position, since he retained the protection of his royal benefactors, but when he came into conflict with them in 610, he and the senior, insular, members of his communities were banished from the kingdom. Theuderic ordered them to be deported – a military escort was to lead them to the Atlantic coast where they were to be put on a ship back to Ireland (Map 3).¹⁰⁰ When they arrived at the estuary of the Loire, whether through the connivance of the guards, as Columbanus suggests in the remarkable letter he wrote to his monks in Burgundy,¹⁰¹ or by some other means, he and his

94 Columbanus, *Epp.* I and II (SCO, pp. 2–23). On this, see Stancliffe, 'Columbanus and the Gallic Bishops'.

95 Columbanus, *Ep.* III: 2 (SCO, pp. 22–25).

96 Columbanus, *Ep.* I: 6 (SCO, pp. 8–9).

97 Columbanus makes this explicit in *Ep.* I (SCO, pp. 3–13) to Pope Gregory the Great. On the Easter controversy in relation to Columbanus and for the context of this debate, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 364–65 and chapter 9 on the Paschal controversy; Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions*, pp. 24–30.

98 Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions*, p. 25 with a table showing comparative Easter dates between 590 and 608.

99 Columbanus, *Ep.* II (SCO, pp. 12–23).

100 *VC* I: 19.

101 Columbanus, *Ep.* IV (SCO, pp. 26–37). Cf. Jonas's more miraculous account in *VC* I: 23.

monks avoided deportation. They made their way north to the court of Chlothar II (d. 629), Theuderic's relative and rival, in Paris, the centre of the north-western Merovingian kingdom of Neustria.¹⁰² There Columbanus established contact with Chagneric and Authari, heads of the Faronids and Gundoinids, powerful Frankish noble families whose sons and daughters would subsequently play an important role in the expansion of monastic foundations in the north and east of the kingdom.¹⁰³

From the region of Meaux on the river Marne the saint and his companions continued to Austrasia, the eastern Merovingian kingdom, to the court of Theudebert II (d. 612), Theuderic's half brother and rival. Theudebert gave Columbanus permission to settle in *Alamannia*, on the eastern borders of his kingdom.¹⁰⁴ The Irishman sailed up the Rhine as far as Lake Constance where he established another monastery at Bregenz, which was located at the intersection of an important road network, and, like Luxeuil, was an old Roman town.¹⁰⁵ According to Jonas and the later corpus of hagiography relating to his disciple Gallus, who remained in the region as a hermit after his master's departure,¹⁰⁶ Columbanus encountered strong opposition from the local people, who persisted in traditional practices deemed pagan.¹⁰⁷

Columbanus also considered going further east to preach to the pagan Slavs but instead decided to go south to Italy, after the balance of power in *Alamannia* shifted, when in 612 his patron Theudebert II was killed following defeat at the hands of Theuderic II.¹⁰⁸ The latter's over-lordship briefly extended to *Alamannia*, before he died of dysentery and his family were killed by Chlothar II, who united the Merovingian kingdoms

102 *VC* I: 24.

103 *VC* I: 26. On these noble families and their involvement in Columbanian monastic foundations, see Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*.

104 *VC* I: 27.

105 *VC* I: 27. The Latin poem *Carmen Navale*, which was once ascribed to Columbanus but which is now thought to have been written by a Carolingian namesake, was inspired by a voyage up the Rhine. The poem is edited and translated in Walker, *SCO*, pp. 190–92.

106 The hagiography on Gallus is edited by Krusch as *Vita Galli confessoris triplex*, MGH, *SRM* IV, pp. 251–337. The site of Gallus's hermitage in the Steinach valley grew into the monastery of St Gallen during the eighth century. Recent excavations have revealed an elite burial from the seventh century as well as the base of an early medieval round tower, on which, see Schnoor, *et al.*, *Gallus und seine Zeit*. The arguments against Gallus's historicity and Irish ethnicity are unconvincing, on which, see Berschin, 'Gallus Abbas Vindicatus'. On Gallus, see now Schär, *Gallus: Der Heilige in seiner Zeit*.

107 *VC* I: 27; Wetti, *Vita Galli* 4–8; Walahfrid Strabo, *Vita Galli* 4–8.

108 *VC* I: 29.

in 613.¹⁰⁹ By this time Columbanus had found refuge at the Lombard court of Agilulf and Theodelinda in Milan, where he became involved in the theological disputes dividing the Italian Church. The Lombard warrior elite were largely Arian Christian, and thus held heretical views on the nature of the Trinity.¹¹⁰ Columbanus preached against the heresy in Milan, and even wrote a treatise against it, which no longer survives.¹¹¹ He also entered the complex debate known as the Three Chapters, which was a theological controversy that began in the Byzantine Empire and spread to Italy, where it divided the Church, causing the Aquileian Schism.¹¹² In the mid-sixth century the Byzantine Emperor Justinian (d. 565) had issued an edict in which the theological writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa were condemned as heretical in an effort to appease opponents of the canons of the Council of Chalcedon (451). Rather than end a schism it caused further division in the Church, because it was seen in the West as an attack on the Council itself, which had not condemned the theology of these three men. Queen Theodelinda, a Bavarian Catholic, together with the leading churchmen of northern Italy, was opposed to the condemnation of the Three Chapters, and thus in schism with the Papacy in Rome, which had reluctantly subscribed to Justinian's edict in 553.¹¹³ Columbanus, who was unhappy that Pope Vigilius had capitulated to Byzantine pressure, became involved in the conflict, attempting to act as broker between the Lombard court and the Papacy, in his most remarkable surviving letter urging Pope Boniface IV to resolve the conflict and to restore unity in the Church.¹¹⁴ As it was, the conflict would not be fully resolved until the Synod of Pavia in 698.

In 613, Columbanus's amicable relationship with the Lombard monarchy was rewarded with the gift of four square miles of land, including a church

109 *VC* I: 28, 29; Fredegar IV: 42 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 34–36).

110 On Lombard Arianism, see Fanning, 'Lombard Arianism Reconsidered'; Pohl, 'Deliberate Ambiguity: The Lombards and Christianity'; Berndt and Steinacher, *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed*.

111 *VC* I: 30.

112 On the Three Chapters controversy in general, see Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East (451–553)*; Chazelle and Cubitt, *The Crisis of the Oikoumene*. See also Price, ed., *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553*.

113 On the controversy in Italy, see Sotinel, 'The Three Chapters and the Transformations of Italy'.

114 Columbanus, *Ep. V* (*SCO*, pp. 36–57), on which, see Bracken, 'Authority and Duty: Columbanus and the Primacy of Rome'. On Columbanus's involvement in the controversy, see Gray and Herren, 'Columbanus and the Three Chapters Controversy – A New Approach'.

and partial rights to a well, at Bobbio, in the foothills of the Apennine mountains, on a road network linking Pavia and Rome, and not far from the Byzantine-controlled Ligurian coast.¹¹⁵ Here Columbanus established his fifth and final monastery. By this time, he was probably in his mid-sixties, and he spent the last year of his life assisting his monks in felling trees to build the monastery, and repairing the ruined basilica that would serve as their church.¹¹⁶ He renewed his custom of retiring frequently to the solitude of a hermitage, making use of a cave in the mountains near Coli, which is prominently featured in a later miracle collection from the tenth century, written by the Bobbio community.¹¹⁷

5 COLUMBANUS'S LEGACY

Columbanus's period of ascetic exile on the Continent was characterized in equal measure by success and failure. As a monastic founder Columbanus established two monasteries – Luxeuil and Bobbio – which were to have a lasting impact on their host societies as vibrant centres of religious life, hubs of economic exchange, culture, and learning. His monastic foundations sidestepped the oversight of bishops and provided Frankish aristocrats with an attractive model for establishing monasteries, by which they could maintain control over their land, while simultaneously providing for their salvation and enhancing their status.¹¹⁸ By seeking to remain independent from external authorities so that he could remain true to his vocation as an ascetic exile, Columbanus inadvertently served as a catalyst for an explosion in monastic foundations that reconfigured the spiritual and economic topography of Merovingian Gaul. More than a hundred new monasteries were founded within a century of Columbanus's death, largely in the north and east of Francia, the heartlands of the now-unified Merovingian kingdom of Chlothar II and his sons.¹¹⁹ This was

115 Agilulf's charter of foundation is edited in *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores* 57, p. 61. On Bobbio's location on a communications network, see Nuvolone, ed., *La fondazione di Bobbio nello sviluppo delle comunicazioni tra Langobardia e Toscana nel Medioevo*.

116 *VC* I: 30.

117 *Miracula S. Columbani*, ed. Dubreucq and Zironi; on this important miracle collection, see O'Hara and Taylor, 'Aristocratic and Monastic Conflict in Tenth-Century Italy'.

118 On this process, see the classic study by Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, pp. 121–51; Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*.

119 Prinz, 'Columbanus, the Frankish Nobility and The Territories East of the Rhine', p. 77.

achieved through close co-operation between the Merovingian royal court and Columbanus's monastery of Luxeuil, an interrelationship that marked a new symbiosis in how secular authorities and monastic groups related to one another.

Columbanus was also instrumental in spreading the popularity of tariffed penance – a system whereby Christians could repeatedly atone for their sins after confessing to a spiritual advisor, which developed into the modern sacrament of Penance practised in the Catholic Church. This system had been developed in British monastic circles in the sixth century, which in turn influenced Irish tradition.¹²⁰ Columbanus championed this new method in his *Penitential* (handbook of penance), which was written both for religious and the laity.¹²¹ An increasing concern with sin and its remedy influenced not only religious practice but also norms of behaviour, the exercise of political power, and mentalities more generally.¹²²

As an author, Columbanus left behind a corpus of work – six letters, two monastic rules, a manual of penance, thirteen sermons, and poems – that are our primary source of information about him as well as one of the most remarkable sources for his lifetime.¹²³ His writings reveal a man who was fully engaged with the issues and the leading figures of his age. Yet, although Columbanus was successful at winning patronage and followers at the highest levels of society, his unwillingness to compromise and his autocratic style of leadership led to conflict both with those who had supported him and from within his own communities.

While the lasting impact of Columbanus might be clear in hindsight, his immediate legacy was not so assured. His letters show that he faced considerable opposition from the beginning of his time in Merovingian

120 Meens, 'The Frequency and Nature of Early Medieval Penance'.

121 Columbanus, *Penitential*, in Walker, *SCO*, pp. 168–80; on which, see Charles-Edwards, 'The Penitential of Columbanus'.

122 Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 220; Brown, 'The Decline of the Empire of God: Amnesty, Penance and the Afterlife from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages'.

123 The prose works are edited in Walker, *SCO*, and studied in detail in *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*. Most of the poems edited by Walker are no longer deemed to be by him: see Lapidge, 'The Authorship of the Adonic Verses *Ad Fidorium attributed to Columbanus*'. However, the *De mundi transitu*, ed. Walker, pp. 182–85, would seem to be by Columbanus: Schaller, '"De mundi transitu": A Rhythmical Poem by Columbanus?'. Another poem which he seems to have written, the *Precamur patrem*, is published by Warren, *The Antiphonary of Bangor*, II, pp. 5–7: see Lapidge, '"Precamur patrem": An Easter Hymn by Columbanus?'. On the poems attributed to Columbanus, see also Herren, 'Some Quantitative Poems Attributed to Columbanus of Bobbio'.

Gaul, both from external authorities and from members of his own communities. Obedience also appears to have been an issue in his foundations.¹²⁴ There had been divisions latent within Luxeuil, as Columbanus's fourth letter makes it clear, but his banishment in 610, along with the insular monks, further splintered the foundation, and must have come as a heavy blow.¹²⁵ His foundation in Bregenz must also have seemed like a failure, and according to the later hagiography relating to Columbanus's disciple Gallus, two of his monks were murdered by locals.¹²⁶ While Jonas makes it clear that some of Columbanus's Frankish monks later joined him and continued on to Bobbio,¹²⁷ those monks who had been critical of Columbanus's leadership presumably remained in Luxeuil, which became a predominantly Frankish house. In banishing the Irish and British monks but allowing the native monks to remain, Theuderic II had pursued an ethnic strategy, ridding his kingdom of the non-conformists. The insular contingent, the senior members of the community, and those Frankish monks who were loyal to Columbanus were the ones who formed the new monastery at Bobbio. It was they who became the guardians of Columbanus's memory.

Yet, at Luxeuil it seems, dissension broke out soon after the saint's death, when a group of monks revolted and left the monastery over the harshness of the monastic life.¹²⁸ Jonas relates that some of the monks later repented and returned to the community, but others suffered various forms of punishment for their disobedience. A more serious monastic rebellion broke out at Luxeuil in the mid-620s when one of the monks, Agrestius, who had been in the service of Theuderic II before he became a monk, challenged monastic practices and customs associated with Columbanus, still current at Luxeuil. Through his uncle, who was bishop of Geneva, Agrestius managed to have a synod of bishops convene in the Burgundian town of Mâcon in 626/27 to deal with these issues.¹²⁹ According to Jonas, who was *parti pris*, at the synod Agrestius denounced Columbanus as a heretic and his practices as heretical. This would have been a direct attack on the memory and legacy of the saint. Confusingly, it

124 Stevenson, 'The Monastic Rules of Columbanus', p. 207.

125 Columbanus, *Ep. IV* (*SCO*, pp. 26–37).

126 Wetti, *Life of Gallus* 8; Walahfrid Strabo, *Life of Gallus* I: 8.

127 *VC* I: 27.

128 *VC* II: 1. On the Luxeuil revolt, see Dunn, 'Columbanus, Charisma and the Revolt of the Monks of Bobbio'. The *supradictum coenobium* ought to be Luxeuil.

129 *VC* II: 9. On the Agrestius Affair, see Dumézil, 'L'Affaire Agrestius de Luxeuil'.

would appear that in certain respects Agrestius was closer to Columbanus than were those presented by Jonas as his true disciples: Agrestius, for instance, seems to have followed Columbanus's stance over the Three Chapters.¹³⁰ The *Life of Columbanus* is, to some extent, a work setting out the claim that Jonas and his associates were the real heirs of the saint: we, therefore, should not trust its account of events absolutely. However, we can surely accept that Agrestius attacked the different method for calculating the date of Easter favoured by Columbanus, the insular style of tonsure (a triangular cut on the crown of the head),¹³¹ and aspects of the liturgical and monastic customs that he deemed unorthodox.¹³² In defence, the new abbot of Luxeuil, Eustasius, argued that these did not contravene Christian teaching. While the bishops did not condemn Columbanus or his practices as heretical, a compromise appears to have been reached.¹³³ Luxeuil dropped the Easter dating favoured by its founder, and adopted that of Victorius of Aquitaine, the *computus* current in Gaul since 541 and the one to which Columbanus had been so vehemently opposed. The severity of the monastic practices may also have been modified by combining them with elements from the more practical and moderate *Rule of Benedict*.¹³⁴ Agrestius's attack on the legacy of Columbanus at Mâcon, and the changes that this brought about within the Luxeuil community, made apparent just how contested Columbanus's legacy was. Even a decade after his death the Irishman remained a controversial figure. His reputation had been publicly tarnished at the synod, while no effort on behalf of the Luxeuil community appears to have been made during this time to commemorate the memory of their founder.

130 Wood, 'Jonas, the Merovingians, and Pope Honorius', pp. 101–02; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 364–65.

131 See McCarthy, 'On the Shape of the Insular Tonsure'.

132 Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian hagiography', pp. 65–66.

133 See Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*', pp. 212–13; Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions*, pp. 51–53.

134 Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*', p. 211; Ó Cróinín, 'A Tale of Two Rules: Benedict and Columbanus'. It is, however, possible that Columbanus himself had already introduced aspects of the Benedictine Rule into his foundations: Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 383–88.

6 JONAS OF BOBBIO: AN ITALIAN MONK IN MEROVINGIAN GAUL

Bobbio's response to Agrestius's attack on the memory of Columbanus was to commission a young monk of the community, Jonas, to write the *Vita* of its founding saint.¹³⁵ Jonas was a native of the ancient Roman town of Susa in the foothills of the Alps of north-west Italy (Map 6).¹³⁶ Susa had been under Byzantine control until 574, when it was ceded to the Frankish kingdom of Burgundy.¹³⁷ When Jonas was born there, sometime towards the very end of the sixth century, the town was under Frankish control. In his hagiography he never identified with the Franks or the Lombards in any way – if something can be discerned of his self-identification then it was Italian.¹³⁸

Growing up in Susa, Jonas would have been familiar with the Roman ruins that can still be seen – remains of the Roman forum have been discovered next to the cathedral. It was in Susa that he probably received his liberal education.¹³⁹ As the town was still in Byzantine hands as late as 574, some semblance of the ancient school system may have continued there as it did in Ravenna and Rome. Although the classics were well represented in the early medieval monastic library at Bobbio,¹⁴⁰ we cannot be sure that they were already present at the time of Jonas's arrival, and it is safer to assume that the rudiments, at least, of his classical knowledge came from the education he received before entering the monastery. Certainly, he was imbued with a sense of the classical past and with a knowledge of classical authors that is remarkable for this period. In his account of the foundation of Bobbio, for example, he notes that Hannibal suffered the loss of many men, elephants, and horses as a result of the battle of the Trebbia

135 The importance of the Agrestius affair is evident from chapters 9 and 10 of Book Two, which are the longest of the entire *Vita*. Abbot Bertulf and the Bobbio community commissioned the work, on which, see Jonas's prefatory letter to the abbots of Bobbio and Luxeuil, below.

136 *VC* II: 5.

137 Gregory of Tours, *DLH* IV: 44 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 239–41); Fredegar IV: 45 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 37–39).

138 On Jonas's Italian self-identification, see O'Hara, '*Patria, peregrinatio, and paenitentia*', pp. 104–06.

139 On Susa's Roman past, see the collected volume of essays, *Romanità valsusina*.

140 On the early library at Bobbio, see Engelbert, 'Zur Frühgeschichte des Bobbieser Skriptoriums'; Zironi, *Il monastero longobardo di Bobbio*, pp. 47–76; Richter, *Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 72–86.



Map 6 The World of Jonas

The boundaries are those of 628 (see www.menestrel.fr)

not far from there.¹⁴¹ Jonas's use of historiography is also apparent in his knowledge of the great Roman historian Sallust, whose style may have been an influence on him.¹⁴² He may also show an awareness of Caesar's *Gallie Wars*,¹⁴³ though there is no verbal parallel. The extraordinary poem with which he concludes Book One of the *Life of Columbanus* is full of classical allusions and references to heroic figures from antiquity, and with considerable hyperbole he argues that the Irish saint was better than all of them.¹⁴⁴ References to the works of Virgil, Ovid, Sallust, Livy (possibly Livius Andronicus rather than Titus Livius), Pliny, Julius Caesar, Varro, and Juvenius can be identified in the *Life*, predominantly, but not exclusively, in the first book.¹⁴⁵ Yet this concentration of allusions to classical authors may also have been directed towards the elite Frankish audience for whom Jonas wrote, whose classicizing tastes have been noted by other scholars.¹⁴⁶ The use of such a range of classical sources is also characteristic of Venantius Fortunatus, Jonas's compatriot active in Merovingian Gaul in the late sixth century, who, although stylistically very different from Jonas, had also received a classical education, in the Byzantine enclave of Ravenna.¹⁴⁷

Nothing is known about Jonas's family, although he describes visiting his mother after entering the community of Bobbio. We can be sure, however, that he joined the monastery soon after Columbanus's death in November 615 – within three months, probably early in 616. This can be calculated with some precision thanks to his account of his visit home

141 *VC* I: 30: Wood, 'Jonas, the Merovingians, and Pope Honorius', pp. 103–05.

142 Roques, 'La langue de Jonas de Bobbio', p. 19.

143 Jonas's description of the site of Besançon in *VC* I: 20 is similar to Caesar, *Gallie Wars* I: 38.

144 The poem *Versus in eius festivitatem ad mensam canendi* is the first poem at the end of *VC*, Book One.

145 For a list of the classical authors Jonas used, see the *index fontium* in de Vogüé, *Jonas de Bobbio: Vie de Saint Colomban et de ses disciples*, pp. 258–66; Breen, 'Columbanus' Monastic Life and Education in Ireland', p. 21. As GB notes, the citations from Livy may come from the poet Livius Andronicus, and not from the more famous historian. GB points out that although only fragments of Livius Andronicus survive, his work was known to Sextus Pompeius Festus, whose work was supposedly available in Bobbio, and also Paul the Deacon, who epitomized him.

146 See Hen, 'Conversion and Masculinity in the Early Medieval West'; Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul, AD 481–751*; Sarti, *Perceiving War and the Military in Early Christian Gaul (ca. 400–700 AD)*.

147 On the work of Venantius Fortunatus, see George, *Venantius Fortunatus: A Latin Poet in Merovingian Gaul*; George, trans., *Venantius Fortunatus: Personal and Political Poems*; Roberts, *The Humblest Sparrow: The Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus*.

to Susa just prior to the death of Abbot Athala in March 625, where he notes that he had been a monk at Bobbio for nine years.¹⁴⁸ He served as the personal assistant (*minister*) to both Athala, Columbanus's successor and most trusted confidant, and to the third abbot, Bertulf. Since he seems to have been exceptionally well educated for the period, it is not surprising that he came to be placed in charge of the abbey's archives, in which capacity he would have been responsible for preserving Columbanus's writings and for safeguarding important documents relating to the abbey.¹⁴⁹

In 628, a year or two after the Synod of Mâcon, Bobbio was engaged in a heated dispute with the local bishop of Tortona, who claimed jurisdictional rights over the abbey. Abbot Bertulf appealed to the Lombard king to intervene, but Ariowald was reluctant to get involved in an ecclesiastical dispute. Instead, he provided support for Bertulf and a small delegation of Bobbio monks to travel to Rome, where they could put their case before the Pope. Jonas, as his abbot's personal assistant, accompanied the delegation to Rome, where they successfully presented their appeal to Pope Honorius I. Bobbio maintained its independence and a charter of exemption was issued – the first of its kind – which placed the abbey under the direct protection of the Pope.¹⁵⁰ Perhaps equally important, one might guess that during the visit to Rome, which would appear to have lasted some weeks, Jonas had access to the papal archives. One wonders whether this accounts for his remarkably early knowledge of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, of which there are numerous echoes, especially in Book Two of the *Life of Columbanus*.¹⁵¹ If they are not the first surviving evidence of knowledge of the pope's hagiographical work, they are among the earliest.

Jonas was thus a trusted member of the Bobbio community who was actively involved in protecting its interests and who knew many of the men who had been closest to Columbanus. Once Bobbio's independence had been assured, the community could now turn to vindicating the memory of their founder. In his prefatory letter to the abbots of Luxeuil and Bobbio, Waldebert, and Bobolenus, Jonas mentions that Abbot Bertulf and the Bobbio

148 *VC* II: 5. For the dating, see O'Hara, 'Jonas of Bobbio and the *Vita Columbani*: Sanctity and Community in the Seventh Century', p. 102.

149 On Jonas as archivist and for his knowledge of Bobbio charters, *VC* II: 9; Richter, *Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 17–18.

150 *VC* II: 23. On the importance of this exemption, see Wood, 'Jonas, the Merovingians, and Pope Honorius'; Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe*, p. 67.

151 See the notes to *VC* I and II *ad loc.*

community had asked him to write the work three years previously.¹⁵² We can establish the date of the composition of the *Life of Columbanus* with some precision. Abbot Bertulf died in 639 and was succeeded by Bobolenus, one of the abbots to whom Jonas dedicates the work. In Book Two, Jonas also notes the death of the Frankish mayor of the palace Aega which occurred in the third year of Clovis II's reign, which can be dated to 642.¹⁵³ As this is the most recent historical event to which he refers, it provides the *terminus post quem* for the dating of the work. Since Jonas tells us that he wrote the *Life of Columbanus* three years after receiving the commission from Bertulf, and since we can calculate that the interval between the death of Bertulf and that of Aega was also three years, the *Life* must have been written in 642 or at the very beginning of 643. It is, however, clear that Jonas himself added to his work: the second of the hymns that conclude the *Life* is prefaced by the statement that 'the first hymn, which I recently sent to you, does not contain his miracles'. In addition, the phraseology at the end of Book Two, chapter 10 seems to indicate the end of a book, while one manuscript explicitly prefaces the chapters on Faremoutiers with the statement that they mark the beginning of Book Three. Thus, although we can be sure about the date of the letter to Waldebert and Bobolenus, which prefaces the *Life of Columbanus*, we cannot be sure whether that date is correct for all the stages of the work's composition and revision.

In the years before writing the *Life*, Jonas, who was no longer permanently based in Bobbio, had made contact with those who had known the saint. He collected eyewitness accounts and travelled widely in the Frankish kingdom. He received information from Columbanus's disciple Gallus;¹⁵⁴ among his other informants was Burgundofara's brother Chagnoald, whose absence from her will may suggest that he was already dead by 633/34.¹⁵⁵ Jonas would seem to have spent some time at Luxeuil,¹⁵⁶ and in 634 he was at the nunnery of Faremoutiers near Paris, where he presided over the commemorative Mass of one of the nuns.¹⁵⁷

152 See *VC, Ep.* Waldebert and Bobolenus with notes, *ad loc.*

153 *VC* II: 17. Aega's death in 642 is noted by Fredegar IV: 83 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 70–71).

154 *VC* I: 11.

155 Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, p. 198. Jonas acknowledges Chagnoald as an informant in *VC* I: 15, and he may well have provided some of the information in *VC* I: 27, 28; II: 7.

156 He talks of learning from Eustasius, *VC, Ep.* to Waldebert and Bobolenus.

157 *VC* II: 12.

This might suggest that for a short time he was an inmate of a male community attached to the house of nuns, the existence of which may be deduced from Bede's account of the second and third abbesses: Jonas himself, however, provides no evidence that Faremoutiers was a 'double monastery',¹⁵⁸ and he may simply have been one of a number of priests attached to the nunnery. At the end of the 630s, he was recruited by the leading missionary of this period, bishop Amandus, to carry out pastoral work in the far north-east frontier of the Frankish kingdom.¹⁵⁹ It was there, while working as a missionary in the flat marshlands of the Scarpe and Scheldt river-basins around Elnone (modern St-Amand-les-Eaux), that he wrote his *Life of Columbanus*.¹⁶⁰

In the seventeenth century, the Benedictine scholar Jean Mabillon identified Jonas with a certain Jonatus, first abbot of Marchiennes, a monastery close to Elnone and founded by Amandus,¹⁶¹ initially as a community for men, but which rapidly came to house nuns, either instead or as well.¹⁶² While this identification has been queried, it seems highly unlikely, given the rarity of the name Jonas, that there were two men with the same name, who both belonged to the circle of Amandus, and were working in the region at the same time.¹⁶³ Moreover, Jonas is referred to as

158 Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* III: 8. Although it is much used in scholarship, the phrase 'double monastery' needs to be treated with caution. The classic discussion in Bateson, 'Origin and Early History of Double Monasteries', is over a century old, and makes too little of the problems in the sources. Nunneries had need of male priests: it is perfectly possible that some (perhaps most) communities that have been described as 'double' were no more than nunneries to which a community of male clergy had been attached, to carry out the necessary liturgical services. For a new assessment of double monasteries, see Wood, 'Merovingian Monasticism and England'.

159 The *Vita Amandi prima* and Amandus's will are translated in Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism, 350–750*, pp. 139–49. On Amandus, see Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 39–42.

160 *VC, Ep.* to Waldebert and Bobolenus.

161 *Annales ordinis S. Benedicti*, ed. Mabillon, I, pp. LXXIX ff. For the foundation of the abbey, see *Annales Marchianenses, s.a.* 641, ed. Bethmann, MGH, *Scriptores* XVI, p. 610 – the annal is, however, a thirteenth-century addition.

162 Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders*, pp. 100–09. Given the fact that it seems to have housed both men and women, the phrase 'double monastery' can reasonably be applied to Marchiennes. When we talk of Marchiennes-Hamage, however, we might better talk of twinned houses.

163 Mabillon's identification was disputed by Pagani, 'Jonas-Ionatus: a proposito della biografia di Giona di Bobbio'. Mériaux, *Gallia irradiata: Saints et sanctuaires dans le nord de la Gaule du haut Moyen Âge*, p. 358, leaves the question open. For a defence of Mabillon's identification, see O'Hara, 'Jonas of Bobbio and the *Vita Columbani*', pp. 121–33.

being an abbot (*Jonas abbas*) in the preface added by a monk of Réomé to his *Life of John*.¹⁶⁴ So, too, Marchiennes preserved the memory of its first abbot as a writer, and it appears that he was venerated as a saint by the Marchiennes community, where he was buried in the side chapel of Saint John the Baptist.¹⁶⁵ An eleventh-century manuscript written in Bobbio depicts him with abbatial mitre and crozier.¹⁶⁶

Albrecht Diem has recently ascribed an anonymous seventh-century rule for nuns (the so-called *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*) to Jonas, based on strong stylistic and literary parallels with Jonas's other known works.¹⁶⁷ If one accepts the attribution, and the identification of Jonas with Jonatus of Marchiennes, then it is logical to think that the *Rule* was written for that community. Alternatively, Jonas may have written for the nearby and dependent nunnery of Hamage, which has been the subject of extensive excavations.¹⁶⁸ The exact chronology of the earliest monastic phases at Hamage is unclear, but it may in time be possible to make comparison between the plan of the monastery and the requirements of the *Rule*.

7 THE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE *LIFE OF COLUMBANUS* AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT

Before discussing the *Life of Columbanus*, it is important to be aware of the textual problems that it presents. Like most modern scholars we have worked on the basis of Bruno Krusch's edition, which is essentially the text we have translated. It is, however, important to realize that what Krusch offered was a reconstruction of Jonas's work. No manuscript contains the whole text of Book Two in the order that its author seems to have envisaged

164 See preface to *VJ*, below.

165 On Jonas's cult at Marchiennes, see Pagani, 'Jonas-Ionatus', p. 64. A plan of the abbatial church from 1755 drawn up from manuscripts belonging to the abbey of Marchiennes notes Jonatus's place of burial in the side chapel of John the Baptist. A twelfth-century source written at Marchiennes notes the name of the first abbot as Jonas, not Jonatus: see *L'Histoire-Polyptyque de l'Abbaye de Marchiennes (1116–1121)*.

166 Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F. III. 15, fol. 21r.

167 An edition is in preparation by Albrecht Diem. On the *Regula*, see Diem, 'Rewriting Benedict: The *regula cuiusdam ad virgines* and Intertextuality as Tools to Construct a Monastic Identity'.

168 On the excavations at Hamage, see Louis, 'Sorores ac fratres in Hamatico degentes: Naissance, évolution et disparition d'une abbaye au haut Moyen Âge: Hamage (France, Nord)', and, more recently, Louis, 'Hamage. Le monastère du haut Moyen Âge'.

– that is the *Life* of Athala, followed by that of Eustasius, an account of the nuns of Faremoutiers, and, as a conclusion to the Book, an account of the monks of Bobbio during the abbacy of Bertulf. This original plan had to be established by internal references within the text.¹⁶⁹ It is, therefore, necessary, to offer some comment on the manuscript tradition.

There are around 168 extant manuscripts of the *Life*, ranging in date from the first half of the ninth to the sixteenth centuries.¹⁷⁰ The large number of surviving manuscripts attests to the popularity and importance of the work, which was not eclipsed by a later revision of the text, unlike the *Vita Vedastis*, which was rewritten by Alcuin, or the *Life of John*, which was rewritten by Rouverius.¹⁷¹ Krusch, who produced the standard edition of the text for the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* in 1905,¹⁷² used 114 manuscripts for his later edition.¹⁷³ However, some additional manuscripts have since been identified, notably one dating to the ninth century, Metz, Grand Séminaire 1, which was discovered in 1954 and edited in 1965.¹⁷⁴

Of the manuscripts of the *Vita Columbani*, or parts of it, the oldest require consideration.

The earliest, St Gallen 553, Krusch's A 1a,¹⁷⁵ was written in the Bodensee region in the second quarter of the ninth century. It contains Jonas's account of Columbanus, Athala, Bertulf, and the monks of Bobbio, that is the whole of Book One, including the verses on Columbanus, but only chapters 1–6 and 23–5 of Book Two: in other words, it omits all the chapters relating to the abbacy of Eustasius at Luxeuil and to Faremoutiers.

169 Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*', pp. 196–99.

170 For an updated list of manuscripts, see Appendix I in O'Hara, 'Jonas of Bobbio and the *Vita Columbani*', pp. 272–80.

171 See Veyrard-Cosme, *L'œuvre hagiographique en prose d'Alcuin: Vitae Willibrordi, Vedasti, Richarii*, pp. 77–107.

172 Krusch initially edited the *VC* for *MGH, SRM IV*, published in 1902, but following Lawlor, 'The Manuscripts of the *Vita S. Columbani*', he revised his text and a new edition appeared in the collection of Jonas's works published in 1905.

173 See 'Conspectus codicum' in Krusch, ed., *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum*, pp. ix–xi. Lawlor published a lengthy discussion of the manuscripts: 'The Manuscripts of the *Vita S. Columbani*'. For Krusch's response, see Krusch, 'Eine englische Studie über die Handschriften der *Vita Columbani*'.

174 Leclercq, 'Un recueil d'hagiographie colombarienne'; Tosi, ed., *Vita Columbani et discipulorumque eius*. In many, although not all, respects the ninth-century St Gallen manuscript, which Krusch used for his edition (A1a), is superior to the Metz manuscript. We have, therefore, taken into account the readings of the Metz manuscript in this translation. A new edition by Alain Dubreucq, completing work carried out by Aidan Breen, is promised.

175 Krusch, ed., *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum*, pp. 60–63.

It would seem, therefore, to derive from an early Bobbio manuscript of the text. The manuscript also contains the only surviving copy of Wetti's *Life of Gallus*,¹⁷⁶ the disciple of Columbanus who remained in the Bodensee region when his master departed for Italy. This second text may suggest that the manuscript is a product of the island monastery of the Reichenau during the abbacy of Walahfrid Strabo (d. 849). Reichenau, one should note, had very close contacts with St Gallen.

The Metz manuscript (Grand Séminaire 1), of which Krusch was not aware, would seem to be slightly later in date: it has been described as the School of Rheims, although it is known to have come from the monastery of St-Mihiel in the diocese of Verdun,¹⁷⁷ and may well derive from Luxeuil tradition. Indeed, the name Luxeuil is highlighted in the manuscript.¹⁷⁸ It is fuller than the St Gallen manuscript, in that it also includes Jonas's account of Eustasius (chapters 7–10), although it again omits the Faremoutiers section. In addition to the transcription of Jonas's work, the manuscript boasts a copy of Adomnán's *Life of Columba*, the second oldest in existence, after that of Schaffhausen. Clearly the scribe had an interest in creating a volume of Irish hagiography.

Other ninth-century manuscripts contain less of Jonas's complete text. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 7984 (Krusch's A 1b¹), which is a collection of hagiographical works including Jonas's account of the *Life of Athala*, apparently from Weissenburg, was dated to the end of the ninth century or the beginning of the tenth by Bischoff.¹⁷⁹ A ninth-century date has also been ascribed to the so-called *Passionarius maior* ('Greater Passionary') of St Gallen (which appears to have been written at the Reichenau), Zurich C 10i (Krusch's A 1b²), a collection of ninety-two saint's Lives, which include those of Eustasius and Burgundofara.¹⁸⁰ Lawlor thought that the copy of

176 Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts*, Part 3, no. 5766, p. 325. For the ecodex, see <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/description/csg/0553> (accessed 27 July 2015). We are indebted to David Ganz for the suggestion that it should be dated to the second quarter of the ninth century.

177 Leclercq, 'Un recueil d'hagiographie colombanienne', *Analecta Bollandiana* 73 (1955), 193–96; Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts*, Part 2, no. 2788, p. 190.

178 Tosi, *Vita Columbani*, p. xxv.

179 Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts*, Part 1, no. 721, p. 155.

180 For Zurich C 10i: Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts*, Part 3, no. 7562, p. 587. The manuscript can be consulted online: <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/zbz/C0010i/7r> (accessed 27 July 2015).

Book One of the *Vita Columbani*, in what is now Manchester, John Rylands Latin MS 91, belonged to the ninth century,¹⁸¹ though a late tenth-century date is likely.¹⁸² It too seems to have originated in St Gallen.

Krusch dated the earliest manuscript to contain all the chapters of the *Life of Columbanus*, Turin F IV 26 (his B 1a),¹⁸³ to the tenth century, but Bischoff has allowed that it might belong to the late ninth.¹⁸⁴ However, although this manuscript contains all Jonas's chapters, it rearranges Book Two so that all the Bobbio chapters (1–6, 23–5) precede those on Luxeuil and Faremoutiers (7–22). Not surprisingly it is a Bobbio product.

In reconstructing his text Krusch used St Gallen 553 as far as possible. For him it was easily the earliest manuscript (since he did not have access to the Metz, Grand Séminaire 1). For the *Life* of Eustasius and for the history of Faremoutiers, however, he had to turn to later manuscripts. The manuscript transmission, and especially that of Book Two, makes it clear that medieval readers were more interested in the first part of the *Life* concerning Columbanus rather than the hotchpotch account of his disciples. Some scholars have queried the structure of the work as edited by Krusch, due to the fact that none of the manuscripts contains the entire text exactly as he published it.¹⁸⁵ As we have already noted, even the early St Gallen and Metz manuscripts omit the section on Faremoutiers entirely, while in the earliest Bobbio manuscript to contain the whole text the chapters of Book Two do not follow the order established by Krusch. Some have suggested that the lengthy section on the Faremoutiers nuns (the longest in Book Two) may never have been intended to be disseminated with the rest of the work. It has even been argued that this section was intended solely for Faremoutiers, that the Bobbio section was intended only for Bobbio, and so forth.¹⁸⁶ Such arguments have brought into question the unity of the work as a whole. Moreover, as we have already noted, it is clear from the sentence separating the two hymns that end Book One that Jonas (or

181 Lawlor, 'The Manuscripts of the *Vita S. Columbani*', pp. 5–6.

182 Hoffmann, *Buchkunst und Königtum im ottonischen und frühsalischen Reich*, p. 385.

183 Krusch, *Jonae Vitae Sanctorum*, p. 104.

184 Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts*, Part 3, *Padua-Zwickau*, no. 6298, p. 389 ('IX/X Jh. (oder X Jh. Anfang)'). The date confirms Cipolla, *Codices Bobbiesi della Biblioteca Nazionale di Torino*, pp. 144–47.

185 Rohr, 'Hagiographie als historische Quelle: Ereignisgeschichte und Wunderberichte in der *Vita Columbani* des Jonas von Bobbio', pp. 242–44.

186 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 2, p. 26 n. 59 and esp. p. 38.

perhaps an early editor) added material to the text.¹⁸⁷ It is also apparent from phrases to be found in some manuscripts at the end of Book Two chapter 10 and at the start of chapter 11 that the work was sometimes divided into three books. Fortunately, however, we can be reasonably certain about Jonas's intentions. In his prefatory letter to the abbots of Bobbio and Luxeuil he states that the *Life* is divided into two volumes, the first dedicated to the deeds of Columbanus and the second to those of his disciples, Athala, Eustasius, and others (*ceteri*). In addition, there are cross-references within the text that make it clear that Jonas conceived the work to be read as a single unit, that it was constructed exactly as reconstructed by Krusch, and that it was meant to be disseminated as such. The Faremoutiers section was an important and integral part of the work. This unity was lost in time as medieval scribes selected which parts of the work they wished to read, and Book Two with its three different geographical foci was easily susceptible to editing.¹⁸⁸

8 JONAS THE HAGIOGRAPHER AND HIS CHRISTIAN SOURCES

By the time Jonas wrote the *Life of Columbanus* it may be that he was the abbot of a double-monastery in the north-east of the Frankish kingdom, having served in the region as a priest under bishop Amandus, the leading missionary figure of this period. As an abbot, he would have taken an active role in regulating the religious life of his community. He had been a respected and active member of the Bobbio community, who had been involved in securing its independence from episcopal control. He was a monk and pastor foremost, a writer second. This is the context in which his hagiography needs to be read and understood. His life was lived each day within the rhythm of the divine office, the slow, meditative reading of the Bible and sacred texts, and the carrying out of his monastic duties. His writing grew out of and was grounded in this experience and tradition.¹⁸⁹

Jonas's skill as an original author becomes apparent when we consider the way in which he used his sources. We have already noted his knowledge

187 'I have provided a hymn which you may order to be sung on the feast of his death, because the first hymn, which I have recently sent to you, does not contain his miracles.'

188 For discussion, see Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*', pp. 196–99.

189 Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography', p. 68.

of the classics, but above all he wrote within a genre of Christian literature which was already well established by his time. There was a canon of late-antique hagiography – Athanasius's *Life of Antony*, Jerome's *Life of Paul* and his other works, Sulpicius Severus's *Life of Martin* – which Jonas knew well and which he explicitly mentions as exemplars.¹⁹⁰ While the influence of these texts can be discerned throughout his hagiography, none of them provided him with rigid models on which to base his work. Jonas wrote within the established tradition of late-antique hagiography, but he exercised considerable skill and originality in the way he used this tradition.

Curiously, Jonas makes no explicit mention of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, which, as we have noted, he knew well, providing important evidence for its early reception.¹⁹¹ Particularly striking is the absence of any explicit reference to the subject of Book Two, Saint Benedict. He was certainly aware not only of Benedict, but also of his *Rule*, elements of which had been introduced into the Columbanian communities at the very latest following the Synod of Mâcon in 626/27, and which is used in the nuns' rule ascribed to Jonas (the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*), alongside the rules attributed to Columbanus. Perhaps the silence over Benedict is best seen as part of a strategy to suggest that Columbanian monasticism was unchanging, and was at no point in need of reform, which would implicitly suggest that the charges levelled by Agrestius, or indeed by any other critics, were unfounded. While Jonas's account of the Agrestius affair in chapters 9 and 10 of Book Two are the longest chapters of the entire *Life*, he makes no mention of any subsequent reform. Since one of Jonas's aims was to vindicate Columbanus's reputation as an orthodox, powerful saint, and to defend his version of the holy man's monastic practices, he may have feared that Benedict and his Rule were competing influences that would overshadow and eclipse the authority of Columbanus and his monastic tradition within his own communities – a legitimate fear as it turned out.

190 *VC* I: 1. On this, see Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*', p. 199.

191 de Vogüé, 'La mort dans les monastères: Jonas de Bobbio et les *Dialogues de Grégoire le Grand*'; Vogeler, 'Jonas und die *Dialogi* Gregors des Grossen'; O'Hara, 'Death and the Afterlife in Jonas of Bobbio's *Vita Columbani*'. *VC* I: 20 resembles Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* I, 2, 4. Jonas, however, developed Gregory's account, as de Vogüé, 'En lisant Jonas de Bobbio: Notes sur la *Vie de Saint Colomban*', p. 81 notes: 'Jonas dit en deux phrases ce que Grégoire dit en une. Il détaille: les pieds des soldats touchent ceux de Colomban, leurs vêtements frôlent les siens, tandis que le saint les regarde avec amusement. L'hagiographe colombanien semble se souvenir du sobre récit des *Dialogues* et le développer.' The incident of the disobedient fox in *VC* II: 25 recalls Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* I: 9, 18.

Jonas's hagiography would also seem to provide the earliest evidence for the reception of Gregory of Tours's major work of historiography completed in 594: the *Ten Books of Histories* (*DLH*).¹⁹² The *Lives* of Columbanus and John, like the *Life of Vedast*, may reveal an awareness of Gregory, although factual differences, and the absence of any certain verbal borrowing, suggest that Jonas did not have the text of the *Histories* in front of him at the time of writing.¹⁹³ As an abbot of a foundation in the north-east of the Frankish kingdom, he was active in the same region where we know the six-book recension of the *Histories* was compiled at this time among circles in which Jonas operated.¹⁹⁴ It is worth emphasizing the overlap between historiography and hagiography, which were far from fixed and exclusive genres, as can be seen from Fredegar's use of the *Vita Columbani* in his Chronicle, compiled in around 660, which provides the earliest evidence for the reception of the *Life of Columbanus*.¹⁹⁵

The greatest source of influence on Jonas's work was, however, his reading and knowledge of the Bible of which there are over seventy direct quotations in the *Life of Columbanus* alone, largely from Deuteronomy, Judges, Ecclesiasticus, Isaiah, and the Psalms, from the Old Testament, and the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, from the New.¹⁹⁶ Jonas's best known biblical comparison is of Brunhild with Jezebel,¹⁹⁷ but he puts an even more striking barrage of biblical allusions to illustrate how the wiles of women corrupted some of the great figures of the Old Testament into the mouth of a holy Irish woman visited by the young saint.¹⁹⁸ Among other biblical parallels one may note the comparison of Agrestius with Cain,¹⁹⁹

192 On the earliest reception of the Gregory's *Histories* in Merovingian Gaul, see Goffart, 'From *Historiae* to *Historia Francorum* and Back Again'; Reimitz, 'Social Networks and Identities in Frankish Historiography: New Aspects of the Textual History of Gregory of Tours', *Historiae*. Neither scholar mentions the evidence of Jonas's hagiography, which reflects the fact that there are no obvious direct quotations of the *Historiae*, and indeed of Gregory's hagiography, but rather an apparent knowledge of their narrative.

193 For his possible use of the *DLH* in the *VJ*, see A. Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul: Jonas' *Vita Iohannis* and the Construction of a Monastic Identity', pp. 16–22. But see also the commentary and notes below on the *VJ* for some reservations as to whether the information on Clovis is taken from Gregory.

194 Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity, and the Framing of Western Ethnicity, 550–850*.

195 See Fredegar IV: 36 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 23–29); O'Hara, 'The *Vita Columbani* in Merovingian Gaul', p. 128.

196 Haupt, 'Jonas erstes Buch vom Leben Columbans', p. 397.

197 *VC* I: 18.

198 *VC* I: 3.

199 *VC* II: 9.

and of Columbanus's thievish raven to that of Noah's ark.²⁰⁰ Much more positively, Jonas sought to model Columbanus on the Old Testament prophet Elijah in the Book of Kings.²⁰¹ All these comparisons were the result of his desire to imbue the events he was writing about with a biblical sensibility.

Not only did the Bible provide Jonas with the largest source of citations and allusions, it also may have influenced his work thematically and structurally. The unusual two-book structure of the *Life*, where one book deals with the principal saint and the second with his disciples, may have been inspired by the paradigm of Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, traditionally ascribed to Luke.²⁰² Jonas used biblical citations and allusions in different ways to emphasize and underline certain points. His use of biblical citations in Book One serves primarily to underline God's providential care and protection for Columbanus and his monks. In Book Two, biblical citations are used more to express religious sentiments, particularly in the context of dying and dissent.

In contrast to writers such as Gregory the Great, who often gave allegorical readings of Scripture, Jonas's theological approach was plain and literal – he was not a sophisticated exegete. He displays a rationalist interpretation of Scripture that is best seen in two miracle accounts in the *Life of Vedast* and the *Life of Columbanus* – and we would see the similarities as one indication of Jonas's authorship of both texts. In the *Life of Vedast* there is a description of a miracle worked by Vedast, in which the bishop turns water into wine, that parallels the miracle of Cana in the Gospel of John (2: 1–11). However, in making a specific allusion to the

200 *VC* I: 15.

201 See, e.g., *VC* I: 20 with notes *ad loc.* On biblical stylization in early medieval hagiography, see Van Uytenghe, 'Le culte des saints et l'hagiographie face à l'écriture: Les avatars d'une relation ambiguë'; Van Uytenghe, 'La Bible dans les vies de saints mérovingiennes: Quelques pistes de recherche'; Matter, 'The Bible in Early Medieval Saints' Lives'; Duncan, 'Signa de caelo in the Lives of St Cuthbert: The Impact of Biblical Images and Exegesis on Early Medieval Hagiography'; Hen, 'The Uses of the Bible and the Perception of Kingship in Merovingian Gaul'.

202 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 2, p. 28. See also Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 346–47. However, in considering whether Jonas envisaged the two books of the *VC* as echoing the division between the Gospels and Acts, it should be noted that the Gospels and Acts are not usually presented as a pair of books. Moreover, whereas there are Gospel citations in Book 1 of *VC*, they are outweighed by the number of quotations from the Old Testament, which is, of course, the basis for the comparison of Columbanus with Elijah. Equally, there are more quotations from Acts in Book One than there are in Book Two. Jonas, therefore, does not seem to direct us to see a parallel between Book One and the Gospels, nor between Book Two and Acts.

Gospel miracle, Jonas notes that what was changed was not the substance of the water, but the taste (*aquas in vinum mutavit saporem*).²⁰³ A similar interpretation is also evident in the *Life of Columbanus* in a miracle account in which Jonas describes how the oil and water which filled a lamp at Faremoutiers had, miraculously during the night, been changed into milk. When the milk was poured out of the lamp, the oil began to increase. At the end of the account, Jonas rhetorically asks: ‘What thing had done this so that it changed the created thing of water into the appearance of milk and commanded the oil to increase to the point of overflowing?’²⁰⁴ As in the miracle performed by Vedast, the essence of the water in the lamp had not changed, only its appearance (*speciem verteret*).²⁰⁵ This rationalist interpretation of Scripture is remarkably similar to that found in the work of the anonymous Irish author known as Augustinus Hibernicus who was also writing in the mid-seventh century.²⁰⁶ Jonas’s literal way of reading Scripture may suggest that he had come under the influence of Irish exegetical tradition at Bobbio.²⁰⁷

Jonas’s biblical citations also reflect the growing popularity and authority of the Vulgate translation of the Bible from which many of his references derive. By contrast, Columbanus took his biblical citations from diverse translations, which may reflect the Irish saint’s early acquaintance with the Bible. On occasion, however, Jonas seems to have borrowed a quotation from one of Columbanus’s sermons. He was so humble, wrote Jonas, that ‘just as men try to seek authority from worldly honours, so vice versa did he with his companions struggle to surpass each other in their devotion to humility, remembering His command, “Who humbles himself shall be exalted”, and that saying of Isaiah, “To whom shall I look if not to

203 *IV* 4.

204 *VC* II: 21.

205 *VC* II: 21.

206 Augustinus Hibernicus, *On the Miracles of Sacred Scripture* (*De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae*), 18. See also MacGinty, ‘The Treatise *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae*: Critical Edition, with Introduction, English Translation of the Long Recension and Some Notes’. On Augustinus Hibernicus’ rationalist interpretation of Scripture, see Bracken, ‘Rationalism and the Bible in Seventh-Century Ireland’; Smyth, ‘The Body, Death, and Resurrection: Perspectives of an Early Irish Theologian’; MacGinty, ‘The Irish Augustine: *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae*’.

207 On this exegetical tradition and in relation to Bobbio, see *The Commentary on the Psalms with Glosses in Old Irish Preserved in the Ambrosian Library* (MS C 301 inf.); Ó Néill, ‘Irish Transmission of Late Antique Learning: The Case of Theodore of Mopsuestia’s Commentary on the Psalms’; Stancliffe, ‘Early “Irish” Biblical Exegesis’.

the humble and quiet man who trembles when I speak?”²⁰⁸ The first citation (Luke 14: 11) is similar to that of the Vulgate, but the second (Isaiah 66: 2) is not. The latter, however, does appear in one of Columbanus’s sermons and, according to G. S. M. Walker, is a form peculiar to the author.²⁰⁹

Not surprisingly, Jonas also drew on theologians admired by Columbanus, not least Jerome and Cassian, and also Caesarius of Arles.²¹⁰ In contrast, the works of Augustine do not feature prominently in Columbanus’s writings, nor in Jonas’s. The only instance where a possible verbal echo from Augustine may be detected in the *Life of Columbanus* is in the cries of the impenitent Faremoutiers nuns of ‘tomorrow, tomorrow’ (*Cras, cras*) that may have been drawn from Augustine’s *Ennarationes in Psalmos* (‘Expositions on the Psalms’), where the bishop of Hippo describes those who delay conversion.²¹¹ It is striking that the influence of Augustine is not greater, as the early library at Bobbio contained many of his writings, including the *De Civitate Dei* (‘The City of God’), *De Doctrina Christiana* (‘On Christian Doctrine’), and the *Ennarationes in Psalmos*. But the same lack of reference is apparent in Columbanus’s own writings, where the influence of Jerome and Cassian is much more prevalent than that of Augustine.²¹²

Jonas wrote within the tradition of late antique Christian apologetics. His works were intended first and foremost to instruct, admonish, and edify his audience, but there were other more immediate concerns, which in the case of the *Life of Columbanus* included the defence of the memory of the saint and the promotion of a very specific monastic ideal.

208 VC I: 5.

209 Columbanus, *Sermon* II: 2 (SCO, p. 70).

210 For Columbanus’s use of Caesarius, see Stancliffe, ‘The Thirteen Sermons Attributed to Columbanus’, pp. 112–18. For Jonas’s use of Caesarius, see section 3, above.

211 VC II: 19. On the use of Augustine, *Ennarationes in Psalmos* 102, 16, see de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 222 n. 11, and de Vogüé, ‘En lisant Jonas’, p. 100.

212 See the ‘Classical and Patristic Index’ in SCO, p. 221, who lists only two instances of Columbanus’s use of Augustine compared to sixteen instances where he cites Cassian, and fifteen of Jerome. Walker’s list, however, is certainly incomplete: see Stancliffe, ‘The Thirteen Sermons Attributed to Columbanus’.

9 THE SECOND BOOK OF THE *LIFE OF COLUMBANUS AND HIS DISCIPLES*

Jonas's brief from Abbot Bertulf and the Bobbio community had simply been to write the *Life* of the founder. He decided to take the story further and to deal with the period from Columbanus's death up to the time of writing. As Clare Stancliffe has argued, the decision to write Book Two appears to have come from Jonas's own initiative.²¹³ One reason he may have done this is because he may have felt that he could not ignore the conflict and dissent which had erupted since Columbanus's death and which had affected both the Bobbio and Luxeuil communities. As we have seen, Columbanus's legacy had been attacked openly by Agrestius at the Synod of Mâcon, which had subsequently led to changes in Columbanian monastic practice. Chapters 9 and 10 of Book Two that deal with the Agrestius affair are the longest of the entire work and show the central importance that this conflict had in Jonas's scheme. Jonas's aim in writing the *Life* was clearly to restore Columbanus's reputation as an orthodox saint, but also arguably to show the effects of dissent and conflict within the communities. He uses Book Two as a didactic tool to contrast the fates of those who remained obedient to Columbanus's teachings – his *instituta* – and those who transgressed and actively sought to undermine them.²¹⁴ This applies both to the religious communities and to the lay elite who were patrons of the communities.

As the abbot of a female religious community, assuming that he is rightly linked to Marchiennes-Hamage,²¹⁵ he could use the example of the Faremoutiers nuns to show to his own nunnery and to other female communities the contrasting fates of those who were obedient and those who were not. He did the same with the Bobbio and Luxeuil chapters. Obedience is the leitmotif that runs throughout the *Life*. The wonderful animal miracle stories are foremost parables of obedience and deference – they are modes of communication through which Jonas seeks to impart important lessons to his audience. These are lessons that needed telling in the years that Jonas wrote, a period of uncertainty for the Columbanian *familia*.²¹⁶

213 Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*', p. 200.

214 On this, see O'Hara, 'Death and the Afterlife in Jonas of Bobbio's *Vita Columbani*'.

215 See section 6, above.

216 Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography', pp. 66–67.

In a way, Book Two is a subtle critique of the changes that had come about within the Columbanian communities since the founder's death.²¹⁷ This is the response of a conservative reactionary. It is worth remembering that Jonas was very well placed, but at the same time that his stance was a specific one. He had been the *minister* or personal assistant to Abbot Athala who was Columbanus's most trusted disciple and successor: he seems to have had contact with the Luxeuil community, and he was closely enough associated with Faremoutiers to be involved in the commemorative Mass for the dead nun Gibitrudis.²¹⁸

One of the most striking aspects of Jonas's *Life of Columbanus* is the emphasis that it places on the community of Faremoutiers. Unlike Annegray, Luxeuil, Fontaine, Bregenz, or Bobbio, it was not founded by the Irish saint, but rather by Chagneric and his wife Leudegundis for their daughter Burgundofara.²¹⁹ The emphasis placed on the nunnery in the *Life* is all the more notable in that Jonas has very little to say about the Irish saint's own foundations of Annegray, Fontaine, and Bregenz. It is also worth noting that, while Jonas's narrative gives the impression that Faremoutiers was a foundation of considerable importance, it was not a very well endowed community, to judge from the Testament of Burgundofara, which assigns to the nunnery no more than parts of two and a half estates (villas), together with houses in and around Meaux, and two mills.²²⁰ This is derisory compared with the endowments of some Merovingian communities, including Luxeuil itself.²²¹ Columbanus, however, had visited Chagneric on his journey from the mouth of the Loire across to the kingdom of Theudebert, and on that occasion he had blessed his host's daughter, and consecrated her to God.²²² This was clearly not seen by Chagneric or his wife as a binding commitment, because the girl was subsequently betrothed.²²³ The betrothal, however, led to Burgundofara losing her sight, which was only restored by the intervention of Eustasius, by that time already abbot of Luxeuil. Thereafter, Chagneric put his son,

217 Intimations of which can be read in Jonas, *Ep. to Waldebert and Bobolenus*, on which, see notes *ad loc.*

218 *VC* II:12.

219 *VC* II: 7.

220 Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', pp. 817–20.

221 Wood, 'Entrusting Western Europe to the Church', pp. 40–41, which overstates the endowment of Faremoutiers.

222 *VC* I: 26.

223 *VC* II: 7.

Chagnoald, and Waldebert, who would later succeed Eustasius at Luxeuil, in charge of the establishment of the nunnery at Faremoutiers.

Faremoutiers is not the only foundation set up in the generation following Columbanus's departure from Francia whose origins are mentioned by Jonas. Well before his exile the Irish saint had visited Waldelenus and Flavia. The couple had been childless, but after Columbanus had prayed for them Flavia gave birth to Donatus, and subsequently to Chramnelenus. As agreed, Donatus was handed over to the Church, later becoming bishop of Besançon, where he founded a monastery known as the Palace (*Palatium*), being situated in the remains of an old imperial building. Donatus's brother Chramnelenus founded another monastery, while their mother Flavia established a nunnery, Jussamoutiers, also in Besançon.²²⁴

In the same chapter in which he details Columbanus's initial blessing of Burgundofara, Jonas records the visit of the Irish saint to Authari and Aiga, whose sons Ado and Dado, as he tells us, founded the nunnery and monastery of Jouarre and Rebais. Curiously, the hagiographer makes no mention of a third son, Rado, or his foundation of Reuil.²²⁵ The foundation date for Rebais is 635.²²⁶ Other Columbanian houses are mentioned in Book Two. Jonas talks of Remiremont, a female house founded by Romaric, following his conversion to asceticism by the Luxeuil monk Amatus, perhaps as early as 620.²²⁷ Remiremont, however, comes across badly in the *Life of Columbanus*, because of the support offered to Agrestius by Amatus and Romaric. We may guess that Jonas's hostility to Remiremont in fact went somewhat deeper: although always seen as a Columbanian house, in many ways it drew more inspiration from the first community with which Amatus had been associated: Agaune. From there it borrowed the highly elaborate liturgy of the *laus perennis*,²²⁸ which is not obviously in line with the simpler monastic ideals expounded in Columbanus's own works. Slightly later than Remiremont are the foundations of Eligius, at Solignac and Paris (St-Martial), which Jonas records along with that of Berthoara in Bourges, and those of Theudulf Babelenus in Isle, Sancoins, Charenton, and Nevers (Map 7).²²⁹

224 VC I: 14.

225 VC I: 26. On Rebais, see also II: 8.

226 Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, p. 125.

227 VC II: 9–10.

228 *Life of Amatus* 10.

229 VC II: 10.



Map 7 Early Columbanian Foundations
 The monastic foundations mentioned in *VC* II:
 the boundaries are those of 628 (see www.menestrel.fr)

Jonas thus provides the basis for a reconstruction of the early history of the Columbanian movement. What he does not explain is the attention he gives to Faremoutiers, which receives twelve chapters,²³⁰ when the other houses get no more than passing mentions. It is easy enough to explain away the lack of detail provided for Remiremont, given its part in the Agrestius affair, and for the houses of Eligius, Berthoara, and Theudulf, since there is no suggestion that the founders had direct contact with Columbanus. One is left, however, with the difference between the attention devoted by Jonas to Faremoutiers and that given to the Besançon houses of the family of Waldelenus, or those founded by the sons of Authari and Aiga.

One solution is to look to the patrons. Chagneric belonged to the so-called Faronid branch of the great Agilolfing family,²³¹ as also did Authari.²³² This was not the case for Waldelenus, whose family connections were rather with the eastern family of the Etichonids, who would later emerge as a major force in Alsace.²³³ Jonas's emphasis on the family of Chagneric may suggest that the Faronids, rather than the Waldeleni, were his patrons, even though the Abbot of Luxeuil at the time of the composition of the *Life of Columbanus*, Waldebert, seems to have belonged to the latter clan.²³⁴

A further possible explanation for Jonas's emphasis on Faremoutiers, and one that may link to the question of the author's patrons, is the simple fact that he himself had connections with the nunnery, for he was certainly present there to celebrate the commemoration held thirty days after the death of Gibitrudis.²³⁵ He may, at the time, have been a member of the male community which Bede suggests was attached to the nunnery at least as early as the days of Burgundofara's successors.²³⁶ In other words, Jonas knew Bobbio, Luxeuil, and Faremoutiers at first hand, and this may have influenced his decision to write almost exclusively about the three houses. The selection coincides with Jonas's first-hand experience, and was perhaps intended to suggest that it reflected a particularly authentic vision of Columbanian monasticism, and indeed that the hagiographer was himself its best representative.

230 *VC* II: 11–22.

231 Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 65–69.

232 Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 69–72.

233 Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 99–108.

234 Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 99–108.

235 *VC* II: 12.

236 Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* III: 8.

It may also be important for Jonas's conception that the one house that he described in detail, which was not founded by Columbanus himself, was a nunnery. The Irishman had, indeed, established no female house. As we have seen, however, Jonas apparently became abbot of Marchiennes, with its dependent nunnery of Hamage. Perhaps, in writing about a female community, he hoped to give Hamage legitimation as a Columbanian foundation. Although no nunnery could be associated directly with Columbanus, Faronid Faremoutiers could be seen as a house which was associated with individuals whom the saint had blessed. Moreover, although Ado, Rado, Donatus, and Chramnelenus could all claim direct contact with Columbanus, Burgundofara is presented as the only virgin who received his blessing. Faremoutiers was as close as one could come to a nunnery created by the founding father of the movement.

There is one further reason for thinking that Faremoutiers has a particular importance for the composition of the *Life of Columbanus*. In Book Two, chapter 17, Jonas states that the mayor of the palace (*maior palatii*: the chief official at the Merovingian court), Aega, had attacked the nunnery, but that divine retribution had followed, and that he had subsequently died. What is particularly striking about this is that Fredegar's *Chronicle* allows us to date Aega's death to 642,²³⁷ less than a year before Jonas completed his great hagiographical work. Indeed, the death of Aega is the last dateable event recorded in the *Life*. One might ask whether the divine vengeance meted on the mayor of the palace was one of the factors that led Jonas finally to carry out the task that had been entrusted to him three years earlier. Clearly, Aega's hostility towards the Faronid family and their foundation of Faremoutiers was considerable: according to Fredegar, immediately before his death his son-in-law Ermenfred killed Chainulf or Chagnulf at Augers.²³⁸ Although Chagnulf is not mentioned by Jonas, probably because he was not an ecclesiastic, he appears as Burgundofara's brother in her will of 633/34.²³⁹ His death led to the Faronids attacking the property of the murderer, with the approval of the queen regent. The death of Aega must have been an event of some significance for Faremoutiers.

237 Fredegar IV: 79, 83 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 67–68, 70–71). On the hostility between Aega and his son-in-law Ermenfred, on the one hand, and the Faronid family and Faremoutiers, on the other, see Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 199, 202–04.

238 Fredegar IV: 83 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 70–71). Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', p. 810.

239 Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', p. 819.

Certainly, the reference to Aega's attack on Faremoutiers and his subsequent death is a reminder that there was a political context to Jonas's writing. The Columbanian communities had benefited from royal support during the reigns of Chlothar II and Dagobert I, but the latter died at the beginning of 639,²⁴⁰ leaving Aega as regent for his young son Clovis II. The Columbanian communities may have feared that the strong support shown by Chlothar II and his son Dagobert II might wane during the minority of Clovis II, and rightly so given the position of Aega as regent. The attention paid to the patrons and enemies of Faremoutiers suggests that Jonas wrote not only for the members of an extensive monastic network that stretched from the Apennines to the shores of the English Channel, but also for the secular leaders on whom that network depended for support.²⁴¹ His hagiography may have been read at the Merovingian royal court and in pious aristocratic households, as well as in monastic refectories. He was writing at a time when monastic hagiography was beginning to have an influence beyond a narrow coterie of ascetics: there was a world of significant aristocratic patronage beyond the confines of the monastery, which the *Life of Columbanus* surely had in mind.²⁴²

There is, perhaps, one further point to bear in mind when considering the moment at which Jonas finally turned to writing the *Life of Columbanus*. While Bobbio received its papal privilege in 628, Luxeuil had to wait until c.640/42. At more or less the same time, John IV issued privileges for the other Columbanian houses of Meaux, Rebais, and Remiremont.²⁴³ These grants may provide some explanation (alongside the purely personal point that Jonas himself was involved) for the considerable emphasis on Bertulf's acquisition of a privilege from Honorius.²⁴⁴ Papal privileges would have been matters of particular interest at the moment when Jonas was writing. But there is a further catch. As the foundation of Romaric, with Amatus as abbot, Remiremont is the subject of considerable criticism from Jonas, because of their support for Agrestius.²⁴⁵ Agilus, at Rebais, was the object of a cure effected by Eustasius, and was thus clearly less admirable than

240 Fredegar IV: 79 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 67–68).

241 On the audience of Jonas's hagiography, see O'Hara, 'The *Vita Columbani* in Merovingian Gaul'.

242 On this social function of hagiography, see Kreiner, *The Social Life of Hagiography in the Merovingian Kingdom*.

243 Anton, *Studien zu den Klosterprivilegien*, p. 59 n. 57.

244 *VC* II: 23.

245 *VC* II: 10.

the abbot of Luxeuil.²⁴⁶ Thus, Jonas draws attention to the papal privilege for Bobbio, but he says nothing about those conveyed to Luxeuil, Meaux, Rebais, and Remiremont. His narrative, however, presents Luxeuil and its abbots as far more saintly than Rebais and especially Remiremont. Perhaps he was deliberately signalling that, while Pope John thought all four monasteries were equally worthy of his support, there was a clear hierarchy among the Columbanian foundations.

10 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Jonas's language has been analysed by Latinists and philologists, and it is not our intention here to add to their research,²⁴⁷ but merely to summarize the main aspects of Jonas's writing. All scholars agree on the significance of Jonas's work for the religious and cultural history of this period and on the quality of the Latin, despite the use of some vulgarized words and despite his orthography and other marks of Vulgar Latin. Gilles Roques was prompted to declare that the seventh century did not seem so completely dark having studied Jonas's works, and that in certain regions, including Susa, the hagiographer's birthplace in north-eastern Italy, quite a high level of culture persisted.²⁴⁸ Bruno Krusch saw Jonas as in some way involved in the renewal in the state of letters in Merovingian Gaul from the middle of the seventh century.²⁴⁹ Similarly, Walter Berschin viewed his influence as substantial, seeing him as a representative of the classical canon of biography, whose work soon attained a classic status in its own field.²⁵⁰

One difficulty in studying Jonas's language is that the earliest surviving manuscripts of his works were written long after the time when

246 *VC* II: 8.

247 Jonas's language has been most fully discussed by Krusch in *Ionae Vitae*, pp. 57–58; Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben', pp. 435–39; Roques, 'La langue de Jonas'; Löfstedt, 'Bemerkungen zur Sprache des Jonas von Bobbio'; Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 2, pp. 38–41.

248 Roques, 'La langue de Jonas', p. 52. See section 6, above.

249 Krusch, *Ionae Vitae*, p. 58; Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben', p. 427.

250 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 2, p. 41: 'Jonas, der den repräsentativen Klassikerkanon der Biographie im VII. Jahrhundert schrieb, ist selbst bald ein Klassiker in seinem Genre geworden. Seine Wirkung ist groß.' ('Jonas, who wrote the representative biographical work of the classic canon in the seventh century, himself soon became a classic in the genre. His influence is considerable.')

Jonas wrote.²⁵¹ Most Merovingian hagiographical texts only survive in Carolingian or later copies: in the case of the *Life of Columbanus* our earliest manuscripts were written two hundred years after Jonas by Carolingian scribes.²⁵² This is likewise the case for the *Lives* of Vedast and John, the earliest manuscripts of which date from the ninth and tenth centuries respectively.²⁵³ As a result, we do not know to what extent the scribes may have changed Jonas's Latin. This was the period in which the Carolingians sought to reform and standardize Latin usage, based on classical norms,²⁵⁴ although there is certainly no evidence that copyists tried to make Jonas's Latin more correct. Like other Merovingian hagiographers, he departs from the strict grammatical rules of classical Latin. Whether his Latin was as idiosyncratic as is implied by Krusch's edition is, however, open to question. When he edited Gregory of Tours's *Histories* Krusch took non-classical orthography and grammar as one of his criteria for making a choice between manuscript readings.²⁵⁵ It is likely that he did the same when editing Jonas: his edition unquestionably presents the reader with considerable problems of comprehension, and translation is often difficult. Some of the difficulties may lie with the editor rather than with the original author. On numerous occasions one has to consult variant readings in the *apparatus criticus*.

We should not expect Jonas to write Classical Latin. All languages are subject to change, and the Latin that was used in Italy and in Francia in the seventh century was well on the way to becoming the forerunner of the modern Romance languages, Italian and French. Behind these changes lay the influence of the spoken language on the written.²⁵⁶ The result was a change in orthography, the main outlines of which have been described on a number of occasions, not least by C. H. Grandgent in 1907 and more

251 Roques, 'La langue de Jonas', p. 8.

252 St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 553 and Metz, Grand Séminaire, 1, both from the mid-ninth century.

253 The earliest manuscript of the *VV* is Montpellier, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Médecine, 55 (dated by Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts*, Part 2, no. 2822 (eighth / ninth centuries)), while that of the *VJ* is Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 11748 (tenth century). On these, see Krusch, *Ionae Vitae*, pp. 297, 323.

254 See Wright, *Late Latin and Early Romance in Spain and Carolingian France*.

255 See the discussion in Buchner, *Gregor von Tours: Zehn Bücher Geschichten*, pp. xxxvi–xliii.

256 On these linguistic developments, see Banniard, *Viva voce: Communication écrite et communication orale du IV^e au IX^e siècle en Occident*.

recently by József Herman.²⁵⁷ The shift to what is known as Vulgar Latin can be seen regularly in Jonas's writing. For example, short 'i' came to be pronounced 'e',²⁵⁸ and thus we find *elegeret* instead of *eligeret*: 's' often turns to 'ex', and vice versa, as in *expectaculum* for *spectaculum*, *expoliator* for *spoliator*, and *spiravit* for *expiravit*. 'F' can replace 'ph' as in *falangas*, and *scafam*. Endings ('m', 'n', 's') are often dropped from a word, as in *suffragio* for *suffragium*, *Luxovio* for *Luxovium*.²⁵⁹ As in the works of many seventh-century authors, so too in Jonas the gender of a noun can differ from classical usage: case endings and declensions do not conform with those to be found in writers of the Golden and Silver Ages. The same is true of Jonas's adjectives. The conjugation of verbs is often non-standard: the ending *-ent* replaces *-unt* in the third person present plural of the third conjugation, as in *aient*, *dicent*, *poscent* ('they say/ask'). Jonas constructs new deponents like *peragrari* ('to travel') while deponent verbs sometimes have to be understood as having a passive meaning, and active verbs a passive meaning.²⁶⁰

Whilst we cannot be sure whether Krusch's edition accurately reflects Jonas's original orthography and grammar, we can be more certain that it preserves his vocabulary and stylistic mannerisms, and here the *Lives* of Columbanus and John are unquestionably distinctive, and indeed florid. Jonas's favourite word is *ovans* 'rejoicing' (it occurs five times in the short *Life of John*),²⁶¹ followed by *uber*, *ubertas* 'fruitful, abundant'.²⁶² He loves to call heavenly light *fulva lux*, 'reddish yellow/ yellow light',²⁶³ while, in common with classical and ancient Christian usage, he uses many names for God, who is called *rerum sator* ('the creator of things'), *reppertor rerum* ('the author of things'), *iustus arbiter* ('the just judge'), *iustus iudex*, *rerum creator* ('the creator of things'), *bonitatis ac munerum institutor* ('the creator of goodness and of gifts'), and *largitor immensus* ('boundless

257 Grandgent, *An Introduction to Vulgar Latin*; Herman, *Vulgar Latin*. For more advanced treatment of the subject the reader should consult Salonijs, *Vitae Patrum: Kritische Untersuchungen über Text, Syntax und Wortschatz der spätlateinischen Vitae Patrum*; Svennung, *Untersuchungen zu Palladius und zur lateinischen Fach- und Volkssprache*; Löfstedt, *Late Latin*; and Adams, *The Text and Language of a Vulgar Latin Chronicle (Anonymus Valesianus II)*.

258 Grandgent, *An Introduction to Vulgar Latin*, pp. 84–85 (§ 201).

259 Grandgent, *An Introduction to Vulgar Latin*, p. 3.

260 See Roques, 'La langue de Jonas'.

261 *VJ* 2, 6, 15, 16, 20.

262 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 2, p. 40.

263 *VC* I: 17.

giver'). While Jonas made an effort to show a richness of language and an embellishment of speech, he did not have a problem with repeating words. As Walter Berschin noted, 'not variety, but accumulation and density (*Verdichtung*) of prose is the style ideal of Jonas.'²⁶⁴

The hagiographer liked using explanatory phrases, as in *pomorum parulorum ... quae etiam bullugas uulgo appellant* ('the tiny fruits which people call blueberries');²⁶⁵ *tegumenta manuum, quos Galli wantos uocant* ('his coverings for the hands, which the Gauls call *wantos*');²⁶⁶ and *uas ... magnum, quem uulgo cupam uocant* ('a large cask that they commonly call a *cupa*').²⁶⁷ Here he gives the Latin name of the object and its popular or 'vulgarized' form. In the case of *bulluga*, the word is attested primarily from the north of the Loire and from eastern Francia, the area in which Columbanus and Jonas himself were active.²⁶⁸ A *cupa/cuba* seems to refer to a vat (*uas magnum*), which in the case mentioned by Jonas was capable of holding almost 175 litres of beer.

Dag Norberg noted the presence of Greek and Germanic words in his language.²⁶⁹ Many of the Greek words used by Jonas, however, are not particularly distinctive, coming from the standard repertory of ecclesiastical vocabulary. Thus, the large number of the Grecisms that appear in the lengthy chapter 18 of the *Life of John* devoted to John's teaching, are taken from Cassian and Porcarius of Lérins.²⁷⁰ The use of the term *migrologa* ('nit-picking') is, however, unquestionably striking.²⁷¹ In so far as Jonas had a liking for Greek terms, it might have been influenced by the fact that until shortly before he was born, Susa, his birthplace, was in Byzantine hands.

Jonas uses some classical words in senses that are slightly unusual. Thus, *superi* means 'those who are still living', and not 'those in heaven',

264 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 2, p. 41.

265 *VC* I: 9.

266 *VC* I: 15.

267 *VC* I: 27. See Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 2, p. 40; Roques, 'La langue de Jonas', p. 49.

268 Roques, 'La langue de Jonas', p. 49.

269 Norberg, 'Le développement du latin en Italie de saint Grégoire le Grand à Paul Diacre', pp. 488–89.

270 *VJ* 18.

271 *VC* II: 10. The manuscript variants (*mrigologa* (sic), *macrologia*, *macrologa*) make it clear that the word puzzled copyists. Jonas is surely borrowing *micrologus* ('nit-picker') from Columbanus, *Ep.* I: 2; V: 1 (*SCO*, pp. 2–3, 36–37).

as was more usual:²⁷² the latter he calls *candidati*, ‘those in white robes’. There are a number of words for which he provides the first evidence. For example, the word *calmen*, ‘heath’, which subsequently appears in charters.²⁷³ In this instance one may guess that his is simply the first attestation of a word which was already in circulation. On other occasions one might wonder whether the neologism is Jonas’s own. For instance, it seems to be in Jonas that we first meet *auliga* (instead of *aulicus*) for ‘courtier’,²⁷⁴ *barriditas* for ‘arrogance’,²⁷⁵ and *remiger* (instead of *remex*) for ‘rower’.²⁷⁶ Mark Stansbury has noted a number of words that seem to have been coined by Jonas: for example, *facitidas* (‘elegance’) and *faleramentum* (‘pomp’).²⁷⁷

There are a number of distinctive stock phrases.²⁷⁸ Albrecht Diem has commented on terminology which he sees as essentially Columbanian to be found in the *Life of John*.²⁷⁹ Such terms as *tenor regule* (‘tenor of the Rule’), *septa monasterii*, and *septa coenubii* (‘enclosure of the monastery/community’) appear in the *Life of Columbanus*, and that of John, and reflect Columbanian attitudes towards living in a community under a Rule, and the inviolability of the monastic space.²⁸⁰ In addition, certain phrases can be used to trace the influence of the *Vita Columbani* on other works of hagiography. A good example is *datur intellegi*, ‘we are given to understand’. Jonas uses this as an introduction to the meaning of a story or of an event.²⁸¹ The same phrase appears in a number of *Lives* of saints associated with the Columbanian movement, for instance, those of Abbess Sadalberga of Laon, and bishops Praeiection and Bonitus of Clermont.²⁸²

272 See, for instance, Lewis and Short, ‘Superi’.

273 *VC* I: 15: Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, ‘calmen’.

274 *VC* I: 19.

275 *VC* II: 9.

276 *VC* I: 22, 23, 27. See Lewis and Short, ‘remex’.

277 *VC* II: 9: *VC* I: 10, 14; 2.1, 9, 12: Stansbury, ‘The Latin of Jonas of Bobbio’, unpublished paper delivered at the Leeds International Medieval Congress 2015.

278 Fouracre and Gerberding, ed. and trans., *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography*, p. 70.

279 Diem, ‘Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, p. 26.

280 Diem, ‘Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, p. 27 and nn. 180–81. *Septa*, one should note, however, is common in the tradition derived from Caesarius of Arles: see Wood, ‘Columbanus, the Columbanian Tradition, and Caesarius’.

281 *VC* I: 20 (p. 194): *Daturque manifeste intellegi*; *VC* I: 27 (p. 214) *datur intellegi diabolium in eo vase fuisse*; *VC* II: 1 (p. 232): *daretur intellegi*; *VC* II: 15 (p. 266): *Quippe datur intellegi, ut qui suis meritis*; *VC* II: 25 (p. 292): *daretur intellegi*.

282 Cited in Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 2, p. 47

Both the *Life of Sadalberga* and the *Passio* of Praeiectus quote directly from the *Life of Columbanus*, but the authors' use of *datur intellegi* further shows their literary dependency on Jonas. Another such phrase is *nec immerito*, meaning 'not incorrectly'. This appears in the *Life of Columbanus* and in that of bishop Audoin of Rouen (a man closely associated with the Columbanian movement, who is also mentioned under the name Dado by Jonas).²⁸³ The *Life of Audoin* does not otherwise show influence from the *Life of Columbanus*, which is surprising, given that it was written within the same Columbanian milieu.

Turning from the question of Jonas's vocabulary to the broader issue of his style, he wrote an idiosyncratic Latin, yet one imbued with classical influences. His learning is apparent from his works, not least from the extraordinary verses which follow Book One of the *Life of Columbanus*. It is also apparent in his dense and abstruse poetical prose, which is employed most especially in the prefaces to his works: as in other texts of the late Antique and early medieval periods these tend to be more elaborate than the main body of the narrative, and in Jonas's case the elaboration is particularly extreme.²⁸⁴ His use of poetic formulae has led Berschin to see his style as eroding the difference between poetry and prose, and to describe the result as a 'Merovingian *Kunstprosa*' ('Art-prose').²⁸⁵ Dom Louis Jarrot, who was also struck by the author's poetical style, wrote that Jonas conceived of his work as 'a work of poetry: he wishes it to be rich and ornamented with all the splendour of poetic style'.²⁸⁶

One simple feature of Jonas's writing, which is certainly distinctive, is his use of the historic present. On a number of occasions in the *Lives* of both Columbanus and John the hagiographer switches into the present

and n. 112. The phrase is used in the *Life of Sadalberga* (in chs 4, 15, 24), the *Passion of Praeiectus* (chs 3, 4, 8), and in the *Life of Bonitus* (ch. 12).

283 *VC* I: 26. See Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography*, p. 70 and n. 163.

284 See Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography*, p. 73.

285 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 2, p. 41: 'Nicht Abwechslung, sondern Häufung, Verdichtung, ist das Stilideal des Jonas. Der Unterschied von Poesie und Prosa ist eingeebnet. Dichterische Formeln dienen als Schmuckelemente dieser merowingischen Kunstprosa.' ('The stylistic ideal of Jonas is not so much variety, but accumulation, compression. The difference between poetry and prose is eroded. Poetic formulae serve as decorative ornaments for this Merovingian Art-prose.')

286 Jarrot, *Jonas, historien ecclésiastique: Étude sur la vie monastique au VI^e siècle*, p. 53: 'une œuvre de poésie; il la veut riche et ornée de tout l'éclat du style poétique'.

tense.²⁸⁷ The same is also true of the *Life of Vedast*.²⁸⁸ The shift, which often occurs at moments involving direct or indirect speech, usually seems intended to make a scene, event, or even (when the sequence of tenses is ignored within a paragraph) a particular moment of a scene, more vivid. The device, however, appears to be somewhat erratically deployed, and is often dropped after a few phrases or sentences. For the translator this can present a problem: Jonas's sequence of tenses occasionally sounds very odd in English – we have, nevertheless, decided to follow the tense to be found in the Latin, because for the most part the choice of tense seems to be deliberate.

Jonas also uses a number of variants when writing personal names, most notably with Columba/Columbanus, but also for several of the nuns at Faremoutiers. We have followed his variations.

287 See, for instance, the account of the meeting of Columbanus and the anchoress, and the saint's subsequent confrontation with his mother (*VC* I: 3); his departure for Gaul (I: 4); his meeting with 'Sigibert' in (I: 6); his healing of the sick woman and his meeting with Carantoc in (I: 7); his encounter with the wolves and the bear in (I: 8); the miraculous spring (I: 9); the establishment of Fontaine (I: 10); Columbanus's conversations with Autiernus and Gallus (I: 11); his dealings with sick monks (I: 12); his orders to the harvesting monks (I: 13); his blessing of Flavia in (I: 14); his healing of the finger of Theudegisil and his dealings with a raven in (I: 15); the miracle of the vessel of beer that did not overflow in (I: 16); Columbanus's dealings with a bear, his feeding of the needy and of the monks, and his dealings with the monk Columba (I: 17); the conflict with Brunhild and Theuderic II, and subsequent events in Besançon and back in Luxeuil (I: 19–20); the journey to Nantes (I: 21–23); the journey from the mouth of the Loire to the courts of Chlothar II and Theudebert II, as well as the households of Chagneric and Authari, and on to Bregenz, and the beer miracle performed there (I: 24–27); the conflict between Theudebert and Theuderic and Columbanus's reactions (I: 28); his arrival in Italy, the acquisition of Bobbio, and the work carried out there, as well as his dealings with Chlothar and Eustasius (I: 30). In Book II there is extensive use of the historic present, for instance in the accounts of the cure of Fraimer's thumb (II: 3); the healing of the boy at Milan (II: 4); preparations for the death of Athala (II: 5); Jonas's visit to his mother (II: 6); the cure of Burgundofara's blindness, and her subsequent entry into the monastic life (II: 7); the missionary activity of Eustasius and the cure of Sadalberga (II: 8); the rebellion of Agrestius and its aftermath (II: 9–10); the deaths of Sisetudis, Gibitrudis, Ercantrudis, Deurechilda, Ansitrudis and her companion, Willesuinda, and Leudeberta (II: 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18); Burgundofara's investigation of the graves of the delinquent nuns (II: 19); the vision seen by Landeberga (II 20); the attack on Blidulf and the ensuing divine vengeance (II: 24); the attack on Meroveus, the death of Agibodus, and the banquet provided by Baudacharius (II: 25).

288 We are indebted to Kurt Smolak for his guidance on the use of the historic present in the *VI*, where it is to be found in chapters 2, 4 (8 times), 6 (twice), and 7.

11 JONAS'S *LIFE OF JOHN*

In 659, twenty-six years after he had composed the *Life of Columbanus*, Jonas, whom we may guess was still abbot of the northern monastery of Marchiennes, was summoned to the Neustro-Burgundian court of the young Chlothar III and his mother, the formidable queen regent Balthild, at Chalon-sur-Saône.²⁸⁹ Unfortunately we do not know the reason for the summons. It might well have been religious, for Balthild was certainly interested in monasticism.²⁹⁰ There might, however, have been a political explanation. A few years earlier, probably in 656, the eastern mayor of the palace, Grimoald, had deposed another young Merovingian, Dagobert II, who had just succeeded to the throne of his father, Sigibert III, and had imposed in his place Childebert, later known as the Adopted, who was perhaps his own son, or else a Merovingian prince for whom he acted as guardian. Within five years, and probably already by 659, Grimoald had been overthrown.²⁹¹ If Jonas was abbot of Marchiennes he was going from a region close to Grimoald's heartlands, or what had been his heartlands, to the rival court. Since the young Dagobert had been sent into exile in Ireland, it may be that Balthild was making efforts to discover his whereabouts: Jonas might well have been regarded as someone knowledgeable in Irish affairs. The political context of his journey to Chalon was, thus, probably significant, even if we do not know why it was undertaken.

En route for Chalon Jonas stopped at the monastery of Réomé, close to Semur-en-Auxois (and one might note that this is on an almost direct line from Marchiennes to Chalon) (Map 6). He may well have known the abbot, Chunna, who had been a monk at Luxeuil,²⁹² and this may have been what prompted him to stay for a few days. While there, the monastic community asked him to write up the *Life* of their founder, John.

According to Jonas, John was a native of Tonnerre, in the diocese of Langres.²⁹³ He decided to leave the parental home, and set up an ascetic

289 *VJ*, praef. 1.

290 *VJ*, praef. 1. For Balthild's monastic policy, see Ewig, 'Das Privileg des Bischofs Berthefried von Amiens für Corbie und die Klosterpolitik der Königin Balthild'. For Balthild herself, see Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History'.

291 *Liber Historiae Francorum* 43. Picard, 'Church and Politics in the Seventh Century: The Irish Exile of Dagobert II'.

292 Bobolenus, *Life of Germanus of Grandval* 6.

293 *VJ* 1.

community in the region of Semur.²⁹⁴ Having gathered a number of followers he had a crisis of conscience, feeling that he himself had received no monastic training. He therefore abandoned his followers and went incognito to the island monastery of Lérins.²⁹⁵ There, after a year and a half, he was recognized by a visitor as the ascetic who had abandoned his own community. His bishop, Gregory of Langres (c.509–39), demanded his return.²⁹⁶ Réomé, thereafter, gained the attention of kings and nobles.²⁹⁷ The remainder of the *Life* concerns John's miracles, two of which can apparently be dated respectively to 539 and 543.²⁹⁸ The date of his death is not given, but Jonas does talk of later abbots of the community: Silvester, Mummolinus, who was to become bishop of Langres, attending councils at Mâcon in 583 and 585, and Leubardinus, suggesting that Réomé flourished throughout the sixth century.²⁹⁹

At first sight, Jonas's narrative seems to provide interesting information relating to the monastic history of Burgundy in the first half of the sixth century. The factual content of the *Life*, however, has been challenged in an important article by Albrecht Diem.³⁰⁰ Diem put a great deal of stress on Jonas's claim that the Abbot of Lérins at the time of John's stay at the island monastery was its founder Honoratus, who died in 429,³⁰¹ and this is obviously in conflict with Jonas's reference to Gregory of Langres, who died in 539, as being bishop at the time of the foundation of Réomé. Diem also emphasized the unlikelihood of the claim that Abbot John, like Moses, died at the age of 120.³⁰² Having noted these impossibilities, he then pointed to the fact that many of the names of characters in the *Life of John* (Hilarius [John's father], Gregory of Langres, Agrestius, Nicasius, Sequanus, Buccelin, Mummolinus, Silvester) also appear in the works of Gregory of Tours and Venantius Fortunatus.³⁰³ As a result, for Diem, John is a constructed saint, and the *Life of John* a fictitious narrative, intended

294 *VJ* 2.

295 *VJ* 4.

296 *VJ* 4.

297 *VJ* 18.

298 *VJ* 15, 17. The chronology is determined by the dates of Theudebert I's campaigns in Italy, and by a known outbreak of plague.

299 *VJ* 19.

300 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul'.

301 *VJ* 4: Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 18.

302 *VJ* 19: Deuteronomy 34:7; Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', pp. 19, 24.

303 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', pp. 19–20.

to present a set of monastic virtues.³⁰⁴ It is, as the first preface states, a ‘spiritual contemplation’ (*spiritualis contemplatio*).

That the *Life* (like most works of hagiography)³⁰⁵ was intended as a spiritual rather than a historical document, is absolutely clear, and it should be read first and foremost for what it reveals about spirituality in Burgundy in the mid-seventh century. There is, however, no need to reject the historicity of the narrative entirely. Certainly, the naming of Honoratus as abbot is incorrect. Yet one can easily accept that Jonas has erroneously inserted the name of the most famous of the Lérins abbots. In all probability, the abbot at the time of John’s visit was Porcarius,³⁰⁶ who on other grounds has been identified as the author of a text known as the *Regula Macharii* (the ‘Rule of Macharius’),³⁰⁷ which appears to be cited in the *Life of John*³⁰⁸ – although the one direct reference made by Jonas to a *Regula Macharii* seems to be to the *Rule of the Four Fathers*, the *Regula Quattuor Patrum*,³⁰⁹ another Rule which may also have come from Lérins.³¹⁰

As for the names which appear in both Jonas and in Gregory of Tours and Venantius Fortunatus, one can only say that they are entirely appropriate for the region and the period, and it is easier to think that Jonas had received genuine information about them than that he had done an immense amount of research to find the names of genuine local figures. There is one puzzle that is not raised by Diem, that is the absence of John from Gregory of Tours’s hagiographical work, the *Glory of the*

304 Diem, ‘The Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, p. 22.

305 See Wood, ‘The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography’, pp. 66–68.

306 For the abbacy of Porcarius at the end of the fifth and beginning of the sixth century, see Heijmans and Pietri, ‘Le “lobby” lérinien: le rayonnement du monastère insulaire du V^e siècle au début du VII^e siècle’, pp. 45–46. For Porcarius’ thought, see Delcogliano, ‘Porcarius of Lérins and his Counsels: A Monastic Study I’ and ‘Porcarius of Lérins and his Counsels: A Monastic Study II’.

307 We have kept the Latin title because there is more than one Rule assigned to someone named Macharius. For the *Regula Macharii* and its authorship, see de Vogüé, *Les règles des saints pères*, I, pp. 287–389; Delcogliano, ‘Porcarius of Lérins and his Counsels: A Monastic Study II’, pp. 46–47.

308 Dubreucq, ‘Lérins et la Bourgondie dans le haut Moyen Âge’, pp. 208–10. See the discussion in the commentary to *VJ* 5, below.

309 *VJ* 5: Diem, ‘The Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, pp. 8–16; Dubreucq, ‘Lérins et la Bourgondie dans le haut Moyen Âge’, pp. 208–10. Dubreucq argues for a shift from the *Regula Macharii* to the *Regula Quattuor Patrum*.

310 For the *Regula Quattuor Patrum*, see de Vogüé, *Les règles des saints pères*, I, pp. 57–283. On its authorship, see Weiss, ‘Lérins et la “Règle des Quatre Pères”’.

Confessors, which treats two other sixth-century monastic figures from the same region of Burgundy.³¹¹ There may, however, be an explanation if we note that John's successor at Réomé was called Silvester. According to Jonas he appointed in his stead Mummolinus, who was subsequently appointed bishop of Langres.³¹² The story may be continued by Gregory of Tours, who relates that one of his relatives, called Silvester, was elected bishop of Langres, but died of an epileptic fit before his installation. Subsequently, Gregory's brother, Peter, was accused of murdering him.³¹³ The two Silvesters may have been the same man, or else closely related, and the bishop of Tours may have ignored Réomé because of the accusations made against his brother.

One other chronological problem is raised by the *Life of John*. Jonas states that the saint lived at a time when Gaul was under the rule of consuls, and he specifically names one called John,³¹⁴ whom Diem, bearing in mind the reference to Honoratus, identified as the imperial usurper, who ruled from 423 to 425.³¹⁵ This, for him, is a further reason for thinking that Jonas's chronology is impossible, and that the narrative of the *Life* is no more than a fiction. The usurper, however, is not the only possible candidate for the consulship. Krusch noted that there were consuls called John in 453, 456, and 457. In fact, there were also two consuls called John in 498 and 499, that is at exactly the time one would have to calculate that abbot John was active. Admittedly they are both eastern consuls, but in 499 there was no western consul.³¹⁶ There may, in fact, be a good reason for Jonas to think that consuls were especially significant in Gaul in the late fifth and early sixth centuries. This was the period in which the valleys of the Saône and

311 Gregory of Tours, *LGC* 85–86 (Desideratus and Sequanus). As Van Dam notes in his commentary, pp. 91–92 n. 96, later copyists added a short account of John to Gregory's text.

312 *VJ* 19.

313 *VJ* 19: Gregory of Tours, *DLH* V: 5 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 259–62).

314 *VJ* 2.

315 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 18.

316 For consuls called John in 453, 456, 498, and 499, see Jones, Martindale Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 2, pp. 599, 600–01, 602–03, 617–18: 'Iohannes 21, 29, 34, 93'. Also Bagnall, Cameron, Schwartz, and Worp, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire* (Atlanta, GA, 1987), for the consuls of 425, 453, 456, 467, 498, 499, and 538 (pp. 384, 441, 446–47, 468–69, 530–31, 532–33, 610–11): Iohannes Scythia (consul for 498, pp. 530–31) is said not to have been noted in the West, except by Cassiodorus, and Iohannes Gibbus (consul for 499, pp. 532–33) is said not to have been disseminated in the West at all – the evidence of Jonas suggests that one of these entries may need modification.

Rhône, which include the setting of the *Life of John*, were ruled by the Burgundian family of the Gibichungs, who, as Mark Handley has pointed out, were unusual in the extent to which they used consular dating in official documents.³¹⁷ Thus Jonas's strange statement that the region was ruled by consuls may indicate his knowledge of a document from the moment at which John's monastery was established. It is, therefore, entirely possible that Jonas drew his chronological information from genuine documents.

Diem's suggestion that Jonas took his information on two other figures, Buccelin and Mummolinus, from Gregory's *Histories*, is also problematic. These two men Jonas names in the context of Theudebert I's invasion of Italy, which we can date to 539, from the historical writings of Marius of Avenches and Procopius, as Krusch noted.³¹⁸ This was one of a number of Frankish invasions of Italy that took advantage of the wars between the Byzantines and Ostrogoths in the mid-sixth century.³¹⁹ Gregory, however, does not associate Mummolinus (or as he calls him Mummolus) with these campaigns.³²⁰ Jonas cannot, therefore, be following him at this point: nor is it likely that he had access to Procopius, whose works were probably not available in Gaul, even though Oliver Rackham has noted a similarity between information to be found in the *Transitus beati Fursei*, written shortly after the *Life of Columbanus*, and Procopius's *Vandal Wars*.³²¹ It is easier to believe that Jonas's interest in Mummolinus derived from Réomé tradition, in that he records a man of the same name, perhaps a relative, as taking over from Silvester as abbot, and as subsequently becoming bishop of Langres.³²² Yet there is a further oddity about Jonas's reference, which is worth pondering. The Italian campaign is not obviously relevant to the story he was telling. One might guess that the reference reflects a personal interest of the hagiographer, because the Merovingian invasions of Italy could have passed through Susa, his own birthplace. Moreover, his

317 Handley, 'Inscribing Time and Identity in the Kingdom of Burgundy'.

318 Krusch, *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum*, p. 338 nn. 1–2; Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle*, s.a. 539; and Procopius, *Wars*, VI: 25, 5 and 24.

319 Gregory of Tours, *DLH* III: 32 (trans. Thorpe, p. 189); Procopius, *Wars*, VII: 33, 5–7; Marius, *Chronicle*, s.a. 556; see Wood, 'The Frontiers of Western Europe: Developments East of the Rhine in the Sixth Century', pp. 240–42.

320 *VJ* 17: Gregory of Tours, *DLH* III: 32 (trans. Thorpe, p. 189). On Mummolus during Theudebert's reign, see also Gregory, *LGM* 30 (trans. Van Dam, pp. 48–51). On the problems of reconstructing these events, see Wood, 'The Frontiers of Western Europe: Developments East of the Rhine in the Sixth Century', p. 242 n. 88.

321 Rackham, *Transitus Beati Fursei*, p. 30.

322 *VJ* 19; see also Gregory of Tours, *DLH* V: 5 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 259–62).

reference to the campaign is prefaced with a strange statement suggesting that the Roman Empire in the West lasted until the days of the sons of Clovis. This would seem to be an echo of an opinion expressed by Procopius,³²³ and while the Byzantine historian is unlikely to have been Jonas's source the hagiographer may again be expressing an opinion that he had heard in Italy – for, as we have already noted, shortly before his birth Susa had been in Byzantine hands.³²⁴

Such a vindication of Jonas's narrative does not undermine Diem's central claim, that the *Life of John* is a spiritual and not a historical work, and also that John is presented in a way that makes him look remarkably similar to Columbanus's disciples. The implications of this second observation, however, are far from clear. It used to be believed that Réomé adopted a Rule drawn from that of Columbanus. This, however, is no more than a hypothesis, which has no evidential basis.³²⁵ Although there are certain parallels between statements in the *Life of John* and the Columbanian rules,³²⁶ the reference to the *Regula Macharii* in the *Life* is surely an indication that in Jonas's time Réomé was still subject to a Rule that was essentially Lérinian. Equally, the citations of Cassian, which dominate chapter 18 of the *Life*, point to the continuity of Provençal spirituality in John's monastery.³²⁷ Even the emphasis on the monastic enclosure (*septa*), which has obvious parallels with Columbanian tradition, could have been drawn from Caesarean monasticism.³²⁸

In one respect the *Life of John* is actually opposed to what Columbanus stood for: in two passages (admittedly apparently early interpolations to Jonas's text) it specifically acknowledges the use of the Victorian calendar³²⁹

323 *VJ* 17; Procopius, *Wars*, VII: 33, 2–6.

324 See section 6, above.

325 Dubreucq, 'Lérins et la Burgondie dans le haut Moyen Âge', p. 211.

326 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', pp. 30, 33, 38.

327 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', pp. 38–44.

328 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 26 emphasizes the use of the word *septa* ('enclosure') in Columbanian monasticism. The idea of the *septa* (if not the word) is already present in Caesarius: *Regula ad virgines*, 50, de Vogüé, *Césaire d'Arles, Œuvres monastiques* 1, pp. 236–37. De Vogüé has traced its transmission through Caesarean circles, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 138. The word itself is used in Gregory of Tours, in the formal letter condemning the rebellious nuns of (the Caesarean house of) the Holy Cross in Poitiers: Gregory of Tours, *DLH* IX: 41 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 532–34).

329 *VJ*, praef. 1, and also the reading of the C text of *VJ* 19 (noted in the footnote to the translation). The preface is certainly not by Jonas, and the second reading may well be a later interpolation made by the Réomé community.

– the computus whose Easter dates the Irish saint refused to follow.³³⁰ Not only is this important evidence for Réomé, but it also supports the idea that Luxeuil came to accept the Victorian calendar, and not the Dionysian, when it abandoned the Irish Easter dating, probably following the Synod of Mâcon of 626/27.³³¹

For the most part, rather than implying that Réomé had become Columbanian, one might argue that Jonas sets out the compatibility of Columbanian and Provençal traditions.³³² Réomé could look Columbanian because it followed traditions similar to those that Columbanus himself followed at Luxeuil – and it is becoming increasingly apparent that Columbanus,³³³ like Jonas,³³⁴ knew his Caesarius, and indeed from the manuscript evidence it is clear that Luxeuil played a role in the dissemination of Caesarius' works.³³⁵ Thus, one might see the *Life of John* not as a text announcing the transformation of Réomé into a Columbanian house, but rather as a statement that it did not need transforming. It may be that the monks wanted this assurance, given the fact that their abbot, Chunna, as we have seen,³³⁶ had come from Luxeuil. And for such a task who better than the man who had claimed that spirituality in Gaul was in the doldrums at the time of Columbanus's arrival?³³⁷

In the *Life of John*, Jonas effectively repudiates his own description of the state of Gaul at the time of Columbanus's arrival, not only in writing about the saint and his spirituality, but also in naming his successors, and thus suggesting that his standards continued at least to the end of the sixth century. That Réomé really was flourishing in the later sixth century (as Lérins seems to have been) may be further supported by the attribution

330 Columbanus, *Ep.* II: 5 (*SCO*, pp. 16–17).

331 *VC* II: 9. Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions: Conflict and Consensus in the Early Medieval Church*, pp. 51–53. See section 5, above.

332 See also Dubreucq, 'Lérins et la Burgondie dans le haut Moyen Âge', pp. 206–12.

333 Stancliffe, 'The Thirteen Sermons Attributed to Columbanus and the Question of their Authorship'; Stancliffe, 'Columbanus's Monasticism and the Sources of its Inspiration: From Basil to the Master?', pp. 22–23 and 27; Stevenson, 'The Monastic Rules of Columbanus', pp. 209, 210, 213.

334 Among the phrases which Jonas took from Caesarius is *medicamenta paenitentii*, which appears in 24 (i.e., a tenth) of the sermons edited by Morin. See *VC* I: 5 and n. 44, above.

335 Tewes, *Die Handschriften der Schule von Luxeuil. Kunst und Ikonographie eines frühmittelalterlichen Skriptoriums*, pp. 150–53, 191–95. See Wood, 'Columbanus, the Columbanian Tradition, and Caesarius'.

336 Bobolenus, *Life of Germanus of Grandval* 6.

337 *VC* I: 5.

of a sixth-century manuscript of Origen and Optatus of Milevis to the monastery's scriptorium.³³⁸ In a sense, the *Life of John* is a *retractatio*: a statement by an older and more mellow Jonas, who no longer needed to make the extreme defences of Columbanian monasticism to be found in the *Life of Columbanus*. And not only does Jonas offer a more positive view of Gallo-Roman spirituality in the later text, but he also presents a far more favourable impression of bishops, which is almost completely at odds with that of his earlier hagiographical work. Gregory of Langres is clearly in the right to demand the return of John from Lérins.³³⁹ The local bishop (perhaps Mummolinus) was involved in the *translatio* (reburial) of the saint³⁴⁰ – although, as Diem has noted, the tomb and its relics are less important than the altar to which it was adjacent, and the Eucharist.³⁴¹ This emphasis on bishops may perhaps strengthen the argument in favour of Jonas as the author of one episcopal *Life*, the *Life of Vedast*.

12 THE *LIFE OF VEDAST OF ARRAS*: AUTHOR AND TEXT

The *Life of Vedast* is the shortest of the *Lives* attributed to Jonas of Bobbio. It concerns the first bishop of Arras, named Vedast, who died c.540 and who is said to have played a role in the conversion of Clovis and the Franks to Christianity. The work, which had previously been thought to have been written in the sixth century by an anonymous cleric of Arras,³⁴² was attributed to Jonas in 1893, when Bruno Krusch presented an argument for his authorship based on strong stylistic and terminological parallels with his other known writings.³⁴³ He argued that the Latin style of the work was more characteristic of the seventh-century ornate and poetic style of Jonas, and suggested that the *Life of Vedast* was an occasional piece, hastily composed in response to a request from the cathedral clergy of Arras. Because of its close similarities with the *Life of Columbanus*, Krusch argued that it was probably written around the same time, and that

338 Lowe, *CLA* XI, no. 1612: MS St Petersburg Public Library Q v 1.2.

339 *VJ* 4.

340 *VJ* 20.

341 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 48.

342 Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben des Jonas von Susa', p. 428.

343 Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben des Jonas von Susa', pp. 435–39.

the work may have been commissioned to coincide with the centenary of Vedast's death in 640.³⁴⁴

Krusch presented compelling evidence for ascribing the work to Jonas.³⁴⁵ Terms such as *ovans* ('rejoicing'), *aequus/rectus arbiter* ('just judge'), *aulici regis* ('courtiers of the king'), *chunei hostium* ('battalions of the army'), *conclitu gradu* ('quickly'), *medicamenta vere fidei/penitentiae* ('medicine of true faith/penitence'), *rerum sator* ('the creator of things'), *vitam degere* ('to pass one's life'), *salubria effamina* ('salubrious greetings'), are stock words and phrases that appear in the Lives of both Vedast and Columbanus. As we have already noted, Jonas tends to employ *superi* in the *Life of Columbanus* to mean 'those still alive', and not 'those in heaven', as was more usual.³⁴⁶ Thus, we find a reference in the prefatory letter to abbots Waldebert and Bobolenus to one *qui adhuc superis iunctus sit* ('who is still living').³⁴⁷ So too there is a phrase in the *Life of Vedast*, *inter superis vitam degeret* ('he remained among the living').³⁴⁸ Such parallels appear to be strong indications that the *Life of Vedast* is the work of Jonas.³⁴⁹ Another distinctive feature that one finds in both texts is alliteration, as, for example, *pugnaturus paratur pergere* ('he prepared to advance and attack') in the *Life of Columbanus*,³⁵⁰ and *regni regimina regeret* ('he ruled over the direction of the kingdom') in that of Vedast.³⁵¹ In addition, Jonas liked to provide very specific topographical indications, as in the description in the *Life of Columbanus* of *villam quendam Vulciacum, quem supra amnem Matronam sita est* ('a certain villa called Ussy on the river Marne'),³⁵² or, in the *Life of John*, *villa quae vocatur Quartaniacum, super fluvium Bridenam* ('in the villa called *Quartaniacum* on the river Brenne').³⁵³ The same precision is apparent in the *Life of Vedast* in the phrase *in pago Vunginse ad locum qui dicitur Grandeponte, iuxta villa Rugliaco, super fluvium Axona* ('a place called Vieux-Pont in the district of Voncq, near the villa *Riguliacum*

344 Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben des Jonas von Susa', p. 440.

345 Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben des Jonas von Susa', esp. pp. 435–40.

346 There seems to be an exception in *VC* II 15.

347 *VC*, *Ep.* to Waldebert and Bobolenus. See the discussion in section 10, above.

348 *VV* 4.

349 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk', pp. 26–27 also notes these stock phrases that are a distinguishing feature of Jonas's writing.

350 *VC* 1.3.

351 *VV* 7.

352 *VC* I: 26.

353 *VJ* 1.

on the river Aisne’).³⁵⁴ To these points raised by Krusch one might add an argument already noted, that both *vitae* present a rationalist interpretation of two miracles, which seems to be dependent on a particular exegetical tradition of reading the Bible.³⁵⁵

Anne-Marie Helvétius, however, has recently challenged Krusch’s ascription of the authorship of the *Life of Vedast* to Jonas.³⁵⁶ Rather than consider Krusch’s linguistic arguments, she emphasized semantic difference between the two texts – and in particular their use of the term *religio*. In the *Life of Columbanus* and the *Life of John* Jonas tends to employ the term *religio* for the regular monastic life, while the author of the *Life of Vedast* uses it more generally to mean the Christian religion.³⁵⁷ This Helvétius linked to a broader point: that monasteries or monks play no role in the work – a silence that she sees as deliberate, and which forms another of her reasons for not ascribing it to Jonas.³⁵⁸ For Helvétius the *Life* was written by a cleric of Arras in the context of competition over the cult of Vedast between the clergy of Arras and the monastery of St-Vaast, which claimed the relics of the saint. It must, therefore, have been written after the monastery had been founded in the later seventh century or possibly as late as 700.³⁵⁹

The author most certainly had accurate topographical knowledge of Arras, as has been borne out by excavations undertaken in the 1970s (Map 8).³⁶⁰ Archaeologists have discovered parts of the Roman *castrum*, as well as traces of the episcopal *cathedra* (throne) from the sixth century, in the nave of the primitive church, and the episcopal residence – the *domus* (‘house/bishop’s house’) and *cellola* (‘cell’) mentioned by Jonas where Vedast died – next to the cathedral.³⁶¹ A number of cemeteries have been identified beyond the city walls, which accords with the Roman sensibilities expressed by Vedast in the *Life*, where the bishop declares that he wishes to be buried outside the city, and one of these may have been intended

354 *VV* 3.

355 *VV* 4: *VC* II: 21. See section 8, above.

356 Helvétius, ‘Clercs ou moines?’.

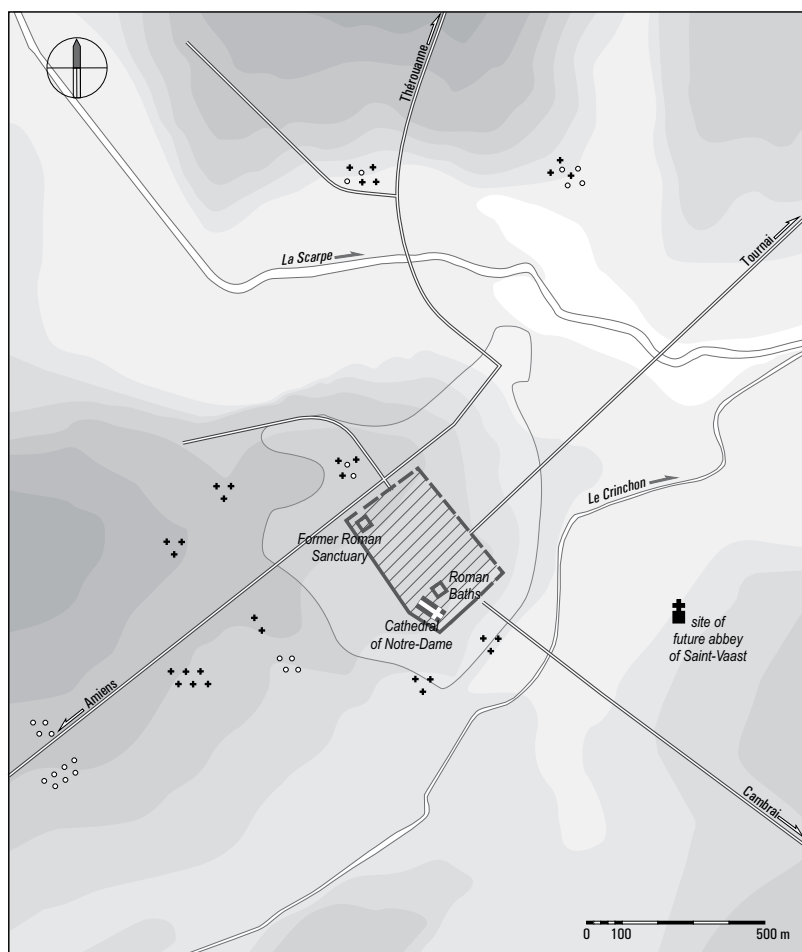
357 Helvétius, ‘Clercs ou moines?’, pp. 677–78.

358 Helvétius, ‘Clercs ou moines?’, p. 677.

359 Carolingian sources date the foundation of the monastery to the reign of Theuderic III (654–91). See Helvétius, ‘Clercs ou moines?’, p. 674; Leman, ‘Topographie chrétienne d’Arras’, p. 177.

360 See Leman, ‘Topographie chrétienne d’Arras’.

361 The Roman *caladarium* had been transformed into the *domus* for the bishop; see Leman, ‘Topographie chrétienne d’Arras’, p. 174.



Map 8 Arras in the Merovingian Period

(after *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VIII^e siècle*, vol. 14, *Province ecclésiastique de Reims (Belgica Secunda)*, ed. L. Pietri (Paris, 2007), p. 87: scale 1/12500)

to serve as the episcopal tomb as other sixth-century graves have been identified there.³⁶² Even the description of the stream Le Crinchon which ran by the walls, and by which Vedast built his oratory from wood, has been confirmed by the archaeology.³⁶³ Pierre Leman has also suggested that the episode of the bear that Vedast expels from its den in the city is not as fanciful as it might at first appear – forestation spread during the Late Empire, which brought animals closer to urban settlements, and the bones of bears have frequently been discovered in early medieval urban settlements, including an abandoned chapel.³⁶⁴

In addition to accepting that the author had first-hand knowledge of Arras, we can also follow Helvétius in noting the distinction between the *Lives* of Vedast and of Columbanus: one concerns the world of a bishop and secular clergy, the other concerns monks and the monastic life. Certainly, the *Life of Columbanus* draws a sharp division between the monastic and the secular clergy. In terms of attitude the two *Lives* are wide apart, and if we only had these two works, and knew nothing else about Jonas, the case for different authorship might be compelling. However, we have the *Life of John*, where there is much less of a division between the monastic and secular clergy, and indeed where the bishops play a benign role. Clearly the opinions expressed in the *Life of Columbanus* are not the only ones held by Jonas, and we must allow that in different contexts and perhaps at different stages of his life he expressed different ideas. It, therefore, seems reasonable to accept that the fact that the word *religio* is used in one sense in the *Lives* of Columbanus and John, and in another in that of Vedast, does not prove different authorship. A single writer could use a word in more than one sense, depending on the nature of the work that he was writing. Indeed, one might argue that *religio* has more than one meaning in the *Life of Columbanus* alone, since the phrase *ob frequentia hostium externorum vel neglegentia praesulum religionis virtus pene abolita habebatur* ('due to the numerous foreign enemies or through the negligence of the bishops, the fervour of the religious life had almost been extinguished there') does not have to refer to monasticism.³⁶⁵

The *Life of Vedast* is silent with regard to monasticism, and certainly this silence would be significant, if, as Helvétius argues, the *Life* was

362 See *VV* 9 with notes. On the necropoli: Leman, 'Topographie chrétienne d'Arras', pp. 171–72, 177, with map on p. 179.

363 *VV* 6, 9; Leman, 'Topographie chrétienne d'Arras', p. 175.

364 *VV* 6; Leman, 'Topographie chrétienne d'Arras', p. 175 n. 51.

365 *VC* I: 5.

written in the context of rival claims, by the clergy of Arras and the monks of Saint-Vaast, over the relics of Vedast. Arguments from silence can, however, be problematic, and, as Pierre Leman has argued, one might equally see the absence of any mention of a monastery as proof that no monastic community had as yet been established in Arras at the time that the *Life* was composed.³⁶⁶

It has been suggested that the oratory which Vedast built of wooden planks on the banks of the Crinchon, according to the *Life*, would provide the focus for the site of the future abbey of St-Vaast, which was located on the right side of the stream, and which developed into a second urban centre – *la ville* as opposed to the Roman *cit  *, which was the site of the cathedral of Notre Dame.³⁶⁷ This may have been a later foundation-legend that sought to claim continuity with the time of Vedast. In actual fact, although the exact site has not been identified, the oratory may have lain just beyond the *castrum* wall, on the left side of the Crinchon.³⁶⁸ The emphasis in the *Life of Vedast*, however, is clearly on the tomb of the saint in the cathedral and on the bed relic in the *domus* adjacent to the cathedral where Vedast died – these were surely the focus of pilgrimage and cult, which bishop Autbert and the cathedral clergy sought to cultivate.³⁶⁹ It seems best, therefore, to place the *Life* within the context of the promotion of Vedast's cult by the Arras clergy during the mid-seventh century, prior to the foundation of St-Vaast. This, however, does not mean that we have to follow Krusch in associating the *Life* with an otherwise unattested translation of the saint's relics to mark the supposed centenary of his death in 640.

As for Autbert, the probable promoter of the cult of Vedast, Jonas is likely to have had contact with him: he was associated with Amandus and with Eligius, both of whom were known to the hagiographer.³⁷⁰ There were links between Marchiennes and Arras, which is only 44 kilometres away. Autbert, who was extremely active in promoting monasticism in his diocese,³⁷¹ supposedly officiated at the consecration of the church at

366 Leman, 'Topographie chr  tienne d'Arras', p. 177.

367 On which, see Leman, 'Topographie chr  tienne d'Arras', pp. 176–77.

368 Leman, 'Topographie chr  tienne d'Arras', p. 176.

369 For the later (Carolingian) traditions (not in the original *Life of Vedast*) that Autbert was involved in the cult, see M  riaux, *Gallia irradiata*, p. 88.

370 The tradition that Autbert was once at Luxeuil has been shown to be a seventeenth-century forgery: M  riaux, *Gallia irradiata*, p. 61, which summarizes the evidence for his contact with Amand.

371 Dierkens, *Abbayes et Chapitres entre Sambre et Meuse (VI  –XI   si  cles)*, pp. 91–95, 304, 305.

Marchiennes, even though the monastery, where Jonas appears to have been abbot, was in the diocese of Verdun.³⁷² It is easy to see how Jonas might have become involved in writing the *Life of Vedast* once he had settled at Marchiennes, and it is not difficult to believe that he could have acquired accurate knowledge of the topography of Arras.

The cathedral city of Arras, however, is not the only focus of the *Life*. Equally, if not more important, are the author's concerns with mission, which certainly coincide with those of Jonas. These are clearly stated in the letter addressed to Waldebert and Bobolenus, which prefaces the *Life of Columbanus*, where Jonas talks of his involvement in the missionary work of Amandus. Helvétius noted the importance of mission within the *Life*, but only considered the later eighth-century missionary interests in the area, and said nothing of seventh-century missionary activity. The *Life of Vedast*, however, might reasonably be seen as a model for the missionary-bishops of Jonas's circle, that is for the Luxeuil-trained monk-bishops who played a prominent role in the Frankish Church at this time, and whom Jonas mentions by name in the *Life of Columbanus*.³⁷³ These men would have been among his target audience, and they were well connected with the royal courts of Austrasia and Neustria.

The hagiographer portrays Vedast as a missionary bishop who acts as a spiritual advisor to Clovis prior to his baptism by bishop Remigius of Rheims. He shows how a bishop should relate to the royal court – as a spiritual advisor, religious instructor, and as a model of humility and moderation.³⁷⁴ The saint goes to a feast prepared for Clovis by one of his nobles not because he wants to share in the revelries of the feast, but because it presents a good opportunity to preach the faith. He is a model of sobriety, in contrast to the drunken Frankish nobles and the excesses of court, something which Jonas also touches upon in the *Life of Columbanus*, where the court and the monastery are presented as binary opposites.³⁷⁵ By his holy way of life and example Vedast implants the faith in his diocese. By subtly drawing parallels between Vedast and Columbanus in their attitude towards the royal court and in the kinds of miracles they work, Jonas communicated to the monk-bishops of the Frankish kingdom the

372 For Autbert's involvement in the consecration of Marchiennes, see Pagani, 'Jonas-Ionatus', p. 60. The evidence, however, is late, and questionable; see Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders*, p. 133.

373 Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 313.

374 *VV* 4–7.

375 *VV* 7.

necessity to persevere in the ascetic life while carrying out the pastoral ministry of their office.

The significance of the court in the *Life of Vedast* was noted by Helvétius, who suggested that the work might have been intended for the Pippinids resident in their great villa of Attigny, around 150 kilometres south-east from Marchiennes. Her observation, however, could equally apply to an earlier period, since the Merovingian king Clovis II acquired the estate in around 651.³⁷⁶ It is certainly possible that one of Jonas's intentions in writing the *Life of Columbanus* was to attract support from the royal court during the minority of Clovis II. We have seen that the hagiographer had links with Clovis and his queen Balthild at the time of writing the *Life of John* in 659.³⁷⁷

Helvétius is unquestionably right to point to major differences of outlook between the *Lives* of Vedast and Columbanus, with regard to the secular clergy. Despite these differences, however, Helvétius's arguments are not strong enough to disprove Krusch's attribution of authorship to Jonas. In particular, they do not tackle the striking terminological and stylistic similarities between the *Life of Vedast* and Jonas's other works, which include the author's striking use of the historic present.³⁷⁸

Yet, in accepting Krusch's argument for Jonas's authorship one need not follow his suggested date of composition of around 640, which he associated with the supposed centenary of Vedast's death.³⁷⁹ This would be a year earlier than the date of the foundation of Marchiennes given in the monastery's annals.³⁸⁰ The date, however, comes in a thirteenth-century addition to the chronicle – one may, therefore, doubt its accuracy. Indeed, it is difficult to square the idea that Jonas became the first abbot of Marchiennes in 641 with the hagiographer's own statement that he was carrying out missionary work with Amandus on the Scheldt for three years between c.639 and 642, although establishing monastic foundations was an important part of missionary work in the region.³⁸¹ It may be sensible to place the composition of the *Life of Vedast* closer to that of the *Life of John*, which is firmly dated to 659, by which time we know that Jonas was capable of expressing a more positive view of bishops. A later date would also fit

376 Barbier, 'Palais et fisc à l'époque carolingienne: Attigny', p. 134.

377 See Preface to the *VJ*.

378 As pointed out to us by Kurt Smolak.

379 Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben des Jonas von Susa', p. 440.

380 *Annals of Marchiennes (Annales Marchianenses)*, s.a. 641, p. 610.

381 *VC, Ep.* to Waldebert and Bobolenus.

with the suggestion that Jonas had an eye on the presence of royalty at Attigny, which was only acquired around 651.³⁸² The inspiration for the text would not be the centenary of Vedast's death, but rather the more general interest in the cult of saints that was developing in the region, and can be seen in Eligius's promotion of saints Quentin and Piatas (in St-Quentin and Seclin), and in the *Life of Gaugericus of Cambrai*, apparently written in the decade after 639,³⁸³ and in all probability at the behest of Autbert, whose diocese included both Cambrai and Arras. Were the composition of the *Life of Vedast* to be placed closer in time to that of the *Life of John* (659) than that of the *Life of Columbanus* (642/43) one might argue that it reflected the views of an older missionary-abbot resigned to working with bishops and with kings. Although there is no absolute certainty, it seems reasonable to accept Jonas as the author.

Turning from the question of authorship and the context in which it was written, to the information that it presents, the *Life of Vedast* is interesting for what it tells us about seventh-century perspectives on the Frankish past – specifically on the conversion of Clovis, a defining event in Merovingian and subsequently French history, and the beginnings of the Christianization of the Franks. Not surprisingly, the *Life* has attracted the attention of historians primarily as a source for the conversion and baptism of Clovis.³⁸⁴ Although there are no verbal parallels, Jonas may have drawn on the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours for his account of Clovis's conversion, which was prompted both by the king's invocation of divine assistance in a decisive battle against the *Alamanni* from which he emerged the victor, and also by the influence of his Catholic wife Chlothild.³⁸⁵ The battle and Clovis's subsequent conversion have traditionally been dated to 496, although a date for the baptism at least a decade later seems to be required by the evidence of Avitus of Vienne, while the main Frankish victory over the *Alamanni* seems to have occurred in c.506.³⁸⁶ Jonas does not follow Gregory's account pedantically and the two narratives differ in

382 Barbier, 'Palais et fisc à l'époque carolingienne: Attigny', p. 134.

383 Mériaux, 'Une *Vita* mérovingienne et ses lectures', p. 170.

384 See Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben', pp. 442–48. On Clovis's reign, see Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 41–49; Becher, *Chlodwig I*, p. 185.

385 Gregory of Tours, *DLH* II: 30 (trans. Thorpe, p. 143). Cf. *VV* 2, with notes.

386 See Wood, 'Gregory of Tours and Clovis'; Shanzer, 'Dating the Baptism of Clovis: The Bishop of Vienne vs. the Bishop of Tours'; Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne: Letters and Selected Prose*, pp. 362–73. Becher, *Chlodwig I*, p. 200 favours the more traditional dating of 496.

some minor respects – indeed, one may wonder whether the differences are enough to suggest that Jonas was not following Gregory, but rather the traditions on which the bishop of Tours had himself drawn. The king of the *Alamanni*, who is killed in Gregory’s account of the battle, survives in Jonas’s version, and becomes the subject of Clovis. Jonas also mentions that after the battle Clovis went to Toul, where he met Vedast who became his catechist and instructed him in the faith – elements in the story not mentioned in Gregory’s account.³⁸⁷ While it might be implied by the bishop of Tours that Clovis’s baptism by bishop Remigius took place in Rheims, Gregory is not explicit on this fact.³⁸⁸ It is Jonas’s *Life of Vedast* and the near contemporary Chronicle of Fredegar that specifically note that the baptism took place at Rheims, the place of royal inauguration for the future kings of France.³⁸⁹ The conversion of Clovis and 3,000 of his Franks was the advent of the Christianization of the Franks – something that Jonas and the monk-bishops in his circle had an active interest in.

In addition to showing an interest in Clovis, the author also set down the cultural memory of the destruction caused by Attila and his Huns during the mid-fifth century in the region of Arras. The hagiographer notes that the Huns destroyed the city, which led to the abandoned state in which Vedast found it.³⁹⁰ Krusch thought that the abandonment of the town might explain Jonas’s apparently anachronistic comment that Remigius as metropolitan appointed Vedast bishop of the *civitas* of Arras – episcopal election was the prerogative of the people of the town, subsequently to be confirmed by the king.³⁹¹ At best, however, the initiative of Remigius illustrates the lack of local ecclesiastical organization, not the complete absence of a Christian population.

While it is unlikely that the town was completely abandoned, and while this may well be a motif to be read in the same light as Jonas’s statement on the condition of Luxeuil at the time of Columbanus’s arrival, evidence for a widespread fire dating to the mid-fifth century has been discovered by the archaeology.³⁹² Whether this destruction was caused by the Huns is less certain, as they may never have reached Arras. The *Life* is the only evidence that Attila made a detour this far north from the places definitely

387 *VV* 3.

388 Gregory of Tours, *DLH* II: 31 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 143–45).

389 *VV* 3; Fredegar III: 21.

390 *VV* 6.

391 Krusch, ‘Zwei Heiligenleben’, p. 431.

392 Leman, ‘Topographie chrétienne d’Arras’, p. 174.

threatened and destroyed by his horde.³⁹³ The destruction layers could in fact have been the responsibility of the Franks under Chlodio, the father of Merovech the eponymous ancestor of the Merovingian dynasty, who burnt the town around the time of the battle of *Vicus Helena*, an unidentified site in the Artois,³⁹⁴ when they were defeated in around 448 by the troops of the Roman general Aetius. Rather than blaming the destruction of the town on the Franks it may have been more attractive for Jonas to exploit the cultural memory and pin it on the Huns – the quintessential destructive barbarians.

13 CONCLUSION: THE INFLUENCE OF JONAS'S HAGIOGRAPHY

Recent study of the early Merovingian Church has complicated our understanding of Columbanus's impact on Gaul, especially as it is described by Jonas. Whilst the Irish saint unquestionably prompted an expansion of monasticism into north-eastern Francia, and indeed an expansion of monasticism more generally, it is important to remember that even by 600 Merovingian Gaul seems to have had a larger number of monasteries than either Spain or Italy.³⁹⁵ The extent to which the monasticism encouraged by Columbanus was new, and even 'Irish' in style, is by no means clear. Although we have two rules by Columbanus, and although these were combined in the course of the seventh century with other rules to form new 'mixed rules' (*regulae mixtae*), those other rules were continental creations, above all the *Rule of Benedict* and the *Rule of Caesarius*.³⁹⁶ And while the Rules and traditions that Columbanus himself championed clearly reflect his training in Ireland, one needs to remember that Irish monasticism was itself an offspring of continental and British asceticism, although certain aspects of its liturgy and learning seem to have been peculiar to itself. Columbanus's computus (Easter calculation) was based on what had been accepted on the continent before Victorius of Aquitaine: and while his penitential clearly played a significant role in popularizing private penance on the continent, the practice would not seem to have been totally new, and

393 Leman, 'Topographie chrétienne d'Arras', pp. 174–75; Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben', p. 432.

394 Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, p. 303.

395 Wood, 'Entrusting Western Europe to the Church, 400–750', p. 41 (around 220 monasteries in Francia, c.600), 46 (around 100 known in Italy), 49 (86 known for Spain).

396 Diem, *Das monastische Experiment*, pp. 249–72.

Columbanus himself was drawing on what appears initially to have been a British tradition.³⁹⁷

In other words, Columbanus needs to be seen as more deeply integrated into the spiritual world of the late sixth and early seventh century than used to be thought. This observation raises the question of why the Irish saint came to be seen as standing out so starkly from the contemporary world. Here part of the answer must surely lie with the power of Jonas's *Life of Columbanus*, for it is to this, and to a short passage in Fredegar derived from it,³⁹⁸ that anyone must turn to learn about Columbanus's career – for the saint's thought, of course, we also have his writings, although by comparison with the *Life* they were not widely disseminated.³⁹⁹

The *Life of Columbanus* had a notable impact on historical and hagiographical writing in late seventh-century Francia. Not only is there the evidence of its use c.660 by Fredegar, but a significant number of seventh-century saint's Lives also make use of it.⁴⁰⁰ Thus, Jonas is cited by the *Life of Germanus of Grandval* of c.675, the *Passio of Praeiectionis* of c.675–76, the *Life of Sadalberga* of c.680, the *Life of Segolena* and the *Life of Wandregisel*, both written before 700. In addition, there is a possible citation in the *Life of Wilfrid* of Stephanus of Ripon, written in Northumbria c.710, while Bede's account of the nuns of Barking in his *Ecclesiastical History* of c.731 may suggest that Jonas's work was known in the London nunnery.⁴⁰¹ One might add that Bede also provides a hagiographical account of Faremoutiers after Burgundofara's death, which seems to reflect the model set down by Jonas.⁴⁰² For a seventh-century work of hagiography this is an impressive tally, but it is worth noting that the Frankish texts, with the exception of the *Life of Segolena*,⁴⁰³ come from centres known to have had links with Luxeuil; meanwhile,

397 Charles-Edwards, 'The Penitential of Columbanus', pp. 218–19, 220–25.

398 Fredegar, *Chronicle*, IV: 36 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 23, 29).

399 See the study by Ludwig Bieler in Walker, *SCO*, pp. lxxiii–lxxviii. Walker lists all the manuscripts that he knew on pp. xciii–iv, but although the list is lengthy it includes works that are now regarded as not being by Columbanus: of the manuscripts which do include genuine works of the saint, most contain only a limited number of such texts (usually one!).

400 Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography', pp. 68–69; O'Hara, 'The *Vita Columbani* in Merovingian Gaul', pp. 126–27. Both lists omit the *Vita Segolena*: see Heinzelmann, 'L'hagiographe mérovingienne: Panorama des documents potentiels', pp. 80–81.

401 Wood, 'Ripon, Francia and the Franks Casket', pp. 14–15.

402 Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* III: 8.

403 The *Vita Segolena* has yet to be integrated into the Columbanian corpus. Its value,

Wilfrid, in his continental journeys, certainly had contact with bishops and abbots who belonged to the 'Columbanian' movement, as arguably did bishop Eorcenwald, the founder of Barking.⁴⁰⁴ In other words, Jonas's hagiography was disseminated through the networks that can be observed in the charter evidence, and can also be traced through letter collections and historical narratives.

This is scarcely surprising: the 'Columbanian' movement was extensive, in part because it could be defined in a number of ways. It was a movement of Columbanus and his immediate disciples, and subsequently of Frankish aristocratic kin-groups inspired by them.⁴⁰⁵ It looked to Columbanus's own Rules and writings, although these were increasingly forgotten, perhaps in part because certain of the theological and religious ideas championed by the Irishman came to be regarded as heretical: significantly, Bede only remembered him as a heretic.⁴⁰⁶ Jonas's *Life* in fact had a more important role to play in the creation of the Columbanian movement: it provided the memory of Columbanus to which later generations could look back.⁴⁰⁷ As the *Life* of a holy man it was in itself a sort of Rule, providing an illustration of Columbanus's thought in action.⁴⁰⁸

At the same time, it is worth noting that not every *Life* of a saint associated with Columbanus or his disciples cited Jonas's work. There may be an echo of Jonas in the *Life of Amatus*,⁴⁰⁹ but there is no obvious citation of his work in the *Lives* of Romaric or of Arnulf. The silences may reflect the fact that not everyone in the Columbanian network was in agreement. Amatus and Romaric are criticized in the *Life of Columbanus*:⁴¹⁰ their

despite its date, has been rejected by Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500–900*, p. 142.

404 Wood, 'Monastères et ports dans l'Angleterre des VII^e–VIII^e siècles', p. 91. Grocock and Wood, *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. xxiii–xxiv.

405 For the kin-groups supporting Columbanian monasticism, see Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*.

406 Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* II: 4.

407 Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography'; O'Hara, 'The *Vita Columbani* in Merovingian Gaul'; Diem, 'Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity'.

408 For a *Life (vita)* as a *Rule (regula)*, see Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography', p. 68; Diem, 'Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity', 528. For other *vitae*, which might also have been read as rules, see Wood, 'Prelude to Columbanus', 4; Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 50.

409 Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography', pp. 69–70 notes the possibility of an echo of the *Life of Columbanus* in the *Life of Amatus*.

410 *VC* II: 10.

take on Columbanian tradition was not exactly that of Abbot Eustasius of Luxeuil or Jonas. Jonas, thus, seems to represent a particular branch of the tradition: although he could have talked of a number of foundations of the second generation of Columbanian monasteries, he singles out Faremoutiers, mentioning only in passing monasteries in such places as Besançon, Rebais, and Laon.⁴¹¹ Jonas's view of Columbanian monasticism is that of Bobbio, Luxeuil, and Faremoutiers, houses to which he is known to have had some personal attachment. It is even possible that Jonas finally decided to put pen to parchment in 642/43, not just shortly after, but even because of, the death in 642 of Aega,⁴¹² the mayor of the palace (*maior domus*) who is described as persecuting Faremoutiers.⁴¹³

Thus, in the seventh century, Jonas's *Life of Columbanus* had a significant impact, but within a very specific circle. Inside that circle the hagiographer was clearly well regarded, as one can see from the commission to write the *Life of John* for Réomé,⁴¹⁴ a community with an abbot who had originated in Luxeuil.⁴¹⁵ If we move beyond the seventh century, the manuscript dissemination suggests that the *Life of Columbanus* was a highly regarded work of hagiography, although, with two exceptions, the ninth-century manuscripts from St Gallen (553) and Metz (Grand Séminaire 1),⁴¹⁶ all the manuscripts seem to belong to the very late ninth and tenth centuries or later. Columbanus does not seem to have attracted much attention from the Carolingians, despite their interest in Irish saints.⁴¹⁷ Luxeuil, unlike Bobbio, or indeed Péronne, where another seventh-century Irishman, Fursa, was buried, was not remembered as an Irish centre.⁴¹⁸

In many respects Jonas's greatest impact was to come in the nineteenth century. If one turns to Gibbon or the historians of the Ancien Régime or the Enlightenment, Columbanus is scarcely anywhere to be seen,⁴¹⁹ even though Jonas's *magnum opus* had already been published, not least by

411 *VC* I: 14, 26: II: 8.

412 Fredegar IV: 83 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 70–71).

413 *VC* II: 17.

414 *VJ*, praef. 1.

415 *VJ*, praef. 1: on Chunna, see Bobolenus, *Life of Germanus of Grandval*, 6.

416 See section 7, above.

417 Meeder, 'The Irish Foundations and the Carolingian World', pp. 472–80. Meeder notes that the centre of Carolingian interest in Columbanus appears to have been St Gallen.

418 Meeder, 'The Irish Foundations and the Carolingian World', p. 480 notes that Luxeuil was never given the epithet *Scottorum* ('of the Irish'), while Péronne, Fosses, and Honau were.

419 Wood, *The Irish in England and on the Continent in the Seventh Century*.

Mabillon.⁴²⁰ In the early decades of the nineteenth century, Guizot picked up on Fredegar's account of the confrontation of Columbanus and Theuderic, but made nothing of Jonas.⁴²¹ Michelet had a little more to say about the Irishman and his influence, but he was somewhat confused, making him the disciple of Columba.⁴²² In the late 1840s, however, Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam placed the Irish, and Columbanus in particular, at the heart of his argument that the Church saved Europe following the collapse of the Roman Empire.⁴²³ His argument was stated even more fully in 1860 by Charles Forbes René de Montalembert, in *Les Moines d'Occident*, where twice as many pages are dedicated to Columbanus as to Benedict.⁴²⁴

For Ozanam and Montalembert, Columbanus was a symbol of the religious revival they wished to see in their own day – and indeed they looked to another Irishman, Daniel O'Connell, as the champion of Catholicism.⁴²⁵ Although their presentation of Columbanus reflected more than a little of their own religious enthusiasm, their image of the Irish saint transforming Europe stuck. It is reflected in the distribution of hagiographical texts by the protestant Bruno Krusch in the MGH. Volume 4 opens with the *Life of Columbanus*.

There can be no doubt that Columbanus was a figure of remarkable charisma, who had a deep impact on late sixth- and seventh-century Francia. There can also be no doubt that Jonas's *Life of Columbanus* is a major work of hagiography, which played a significant role in preserving the memory of Columbanus, and indeed in presenting it in a very particular way,⁴²⁶ which does not entirely reflect the saint himself, but rather the needs of one group of his followers. Trying to gauge precisely Columbanus's importance and the extent to which it springs from his Irish cultural background rather than his reinvigoration of Provençal tradition, and trying to work out the role played by Jonas in developing a notion of Columbanian monasticism, are subjects which are still being debated. But the challenges posed by Jonas, and his presentation of Columbanus, and of other saints, need to

420 Mabillon, *Acta Sanctorum ordinis sancti Benedicti*, vol. 2, pp. 5–55.

421 Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en France*, vol. 2, pp. 18–23. Wood, 'Columbanian Monasticism: A Contested Concept'.

422 Michelet, *Histoire de France*, vol. 2, pp. 266–72.

423 Ozanam, *Études germaniques pour servir à l'histoire des francs*; Ozanam, *La civilisation chrétienne chez les Francs*.

424 Montalembert, *Les moines d'Occident*, vol. 2, pp. 3–92 (on Benedict), pp. 451–640 (on Columbanus).

425 Wood, *The Irish in England and on the Continent in the Seventh Century*.

426 Diem, 'Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity'.

be addressed by any scholar of the seventh century, and by anyone with an interest in the importance of the monastic movement in the centuries following the Fall of Rome.

14 A NOTE ON THE TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS OF THE *LIFE OF COLUMBANUS*

The edition of the *Life of Columbanus* produced by Krusch, initially for the *Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum* series of the MGH, and subsequently in revised form for the *Scriptores in usum scholarum*, is the essential text for any scholar. As we have noted, however, this made no use of the Metz manuscript (Grand Séminaire 1), which is probably only slightly younger than St Gallen 553, which Krusch regarded as central in his reconstruction of the text. The Metz manuscript was published separately by Tosi in 1965. As we have also noted, neither manuscript presents the text as it was originally conceived: the original conception had to be reconstructed by Krusch. There is clearly a need for a new edition, and that should be provided in the near future by Alain Dubreucq, taking up an unfinished project of Aidan Breen.

Given the problems of reconstructing the text, the sometimes curious choices made by Krusch, and also the fact that one needs to take into account the readings of the Metz manuscript, on numerous occasions we have not followed the MGH edition. In the majority of those instances we have taken the advice of Michael Lapidge in preferring readings that Krusch assigned to the footnotes, and also in accepting emendations to the text. The major changes to Krusch's text are listed in an appendix.

We are not the first to attempt to translate the *Life of Columbanus*, though strangely enough there seems to have been no previous translation into English of both books. Book One was translated as early as 1895 by D. C. Munro, and is readily available online.⁴²⁷ There are inevitable problems with this translation, since it pre-dated Krusch's edition. Moreover, Munro omitted the poem which opens the narrative of Columbanus's life, as Rand noted, before offering his own translation of the verses.⁴²⁸ There is no previous English translation of the whole of Book Two that we know of, although Ian Wood translated chapters 1–6 and 23–25 (the chapters devoted

427 Munro, trans., *The Life of St Columban, by the Monk Jonas*.

428 Rand, 'The Irish Flavor of the *Hisperica Famina*', pp. 136–37.

to Bobbio),⁴²⁹ and Jo Ann McNamara those concerned with the nuns of Faremoutiers.⁴³⁰ Neither translation followed Jonas's Latin precisely. To our knowledge there have been no previous English translations of the *Lives* of John or Vedast.

Among translations of the *Life of Columbanus* into other languages, the only one to address the complete text of Jonas is that by Adalbert de Vogüé, although sentences have been omitted (apparently because of their difficulty), while others have been emended to bring them closer to Benedictine tradition.⁴³¹ Adalbert de Vogüé, it should be said, offers a surprisingly unreliable rendering of Jonas's Latin. Tosi provided an Italian translation for his edition of Metz, Grand Séminaire 1, but since the manuscript lacked the chapters on Faremoutiers these were not translated. In addition, there is a German translation of Book One by Herbert Haupt.⁴³²

We have had occasion to consult all these translations in the course of our own work. In a text that is as frequently opaque as that of Jonas, the conclusions reached by others are usually helpful, even if one comes to disagree with them. The notes appended to these earlier translations have also proved a great resource. In particular, those provided by de Vogüé have been a mine of information, especially with regard to the identification of biblical and Patristic citations. Without these earlier attempts to translate and comment on Jonas's text our task would have been a great deal more difficult.

429 Wood, 'Jonas of Bobbio, the Abbots of Bobbio from the Life of St Columbanus'.

430 McNamara, 'Burgundofara, Abbess of Faremoutiers (603–45)'.

431 de Vogüé, *Jonas de Bobbio: Vie de Saint Colomban et de ses disciples*.

432 Haupt, 'Jonas erstes Buch vom Leben Columbans'.

JONAS, *THE LIFE OF COLUMBANUS* *AND HIS DISCIPLES*

LETTER TO ABBOTS WALDEBERT AND BOBOLENUS

To the fathers Waldebert and Bobolenus, distinguished lords graced by the exercise of high holy office and sustained by an abundance of the religious spirit, Jonas a sinner.¹

I recall that about three years ago,² when I was spending time in the countryside of the Apennines while staying in the monastery of Bobbio, I promised I would do my best to give a written account of the deeds of the beloved father Columbanus at the supportive urging³ of the brothers and at the bidding of the blessed abbot Bertulf.⁴ I have done this especially

1 Jonas addresses his work to the abbots of Luxeuil and Bobbio. Waldebert was the third abbot of Luxeuil from 629 to 670. Bobolenus was the fourth abbot of Bobbio from 639 to around 652. In dedicating the work to both abbots Jonas clearly intended it for the extended Columbanian *familia* or network of monasteries in both Merovingian Gaul and Lombard Italy. Both Columbanus and Jonas used the term *peccator* ('sinner') in referring to themselves while both addressed their correspondents in highly deferential tones. See, for example, Columbanus, *Epp.* II: 1; III: 1; IV: 1 (*SCO*, pp. 12, 22, 26), in which Columbanus referred to himself as *peccator*. Cf. also *Ep.* V: 1 (*SCO*, p. 36) for Columbanus's hyperbolic address to Pope Boniface IV. This contrasts with the language of late-antique friendship letters where effusive emotional words were more commonplace.

2 Abbot Bertulf and the community of Bobbio commissioned the work. Bertulf's death in 639 gives a *terminus ante quem* for the commission. Since Jonas says it was three years before he wrote the *Life*, and since in *VC* II: 17 he refers to an event that took place in 642, we can conclude that 642 is the date of composition.

3 *Coniventia* can mean 'connivance' but also 'consent/support'. See Niermeyer, *coniventia*.

4 Bertulf was the third abbot of Bobbio and the successor of Athala (see next n.) from 626 to 639. He was related to Arnulf of Metz, and thus to the ancestors of the Carolingians: *VC* II: 23. See Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, p. 95. Jonas was his *minister* or personal assistant (as he was for Athala) and so would have had close access to both abbots. He accompanied Bertulf on his historic journey to Rome in 628 when Bertulf obtained the

because there are so many among you still living who were there at the time and saw what he accomplished, and who give us, not a second-hand, but an eye-witness account. Moreover, I also learnt things from the venerable men, Athala and Eustasius, who were his successors at Bobbio and Luxeuil respectively,⁵ monasteries of which you now are the heads; and they, as masters, passed on to their communities⁶ those teachings which deserved to be kept.⁷ The life of these men I have set down below as best I can, as well as that of many whom renown has made worth remembering. But despite the love of the aforementioned brothers and the urgent request of the aforesaid abbot which might be thought to make this work easier, I find I am unequal to this task. For, if I had not judged myself entirely unworthy for this work, I would have started trying to compile it at once, although that would have been a rash attempt, even though for three years the Scarpe conveyed me along the shores of the Ocean in a boat, the Scheldt often soaked me while I cut a path through its gentle passages in a skiff, and the humid fen of the Elnone⁸ made my feet

first papal privilege of immunity from Pope Honorius I that ensured Bobbio's autonomy from the local diocesan (*VC* II: 23).

5 Athala, a Burgundian Frank, was one of Columbanus's closest disciples. Columbanus entrusted him with the leadership of Luxeuil on his banishment in 610 (*Ep.* IV: *SCO*, pp. 26–37), but he later left the community to join Columbanus in exile. He succeeded him to the abbacy of Bobbio from 615 to 626. Eustasius became the second abbot of Luxeuil and ruled until 629. Jonas dedicates two sections of Book Two to these abbots (*VC* II: 1–6, 7–11).

6 Jonas uses a range of terms for 'community', and in general the employment of synonyms is a distinctive characteristic of his style. Here he uses *plebes*, which in classical Latin means the common people, to mean the monastic community, taking a secular term and translating it into a religious setting in order to signify a relationship of dependency between the abbot and the community, his people, who are also God's people. Elsewhere he distinguishes the monastic from the secular community, the *populi* (*VC* II: 8). See also *VJ* 3, 4, 5, 18. In other early medieval texts *plebes* means something closer to a rural church: see Niermeyer. Hence Italian *pieve* and Breton *plou*. On Jonas's terms for community, see de Vogüé, 'En lisant Jonas', pp. 64–71, 81–82.

7 The use of the gerund *servanda* implies that something 'should' or 'ought to be preserved'. The message is a subtle one but clear—the *instituta* or 'teachings' of Columbanus have been neglected by the abbots and they should take heed to preserve them. Jonas's use of the term *instituta* recalls Cassian's formative writings on the monastic life, the *Institutes*, whose authoritative teachings had a significant influence on Columbanus. The term encompasses both the monastic ethos or vision of Columbanus and his written guides for living the monastic life.

8 Jonas was a missionary in the north-east of the Frankish kingdom when he wrote the *Life*. He had been helping bishop Amandus, one of the leading missionary figures of the seventh century, and who was later appointed bishop of Maastricht. Amandus played

wet as I assisted the venerable bishop Amandus, who had been appointed to these regions in order to cut down the long-established errors of the Sicambrians⁹ with the blade of the Gospel.¹⁰ The elegance of the work I have undertaken will fall to your discretion, so that if some things, less clear than they should be, lack the refinement of sophistication, they may be embellished by your literary graces and become appropriate to my readers. And while some of them may be horrified at my lack of literary skill, since deeds are not matched by words,¹¹ let them not fail, in distaste, to imitate the virtues of the saints, and while rejoicing at the work's birth, stretch out their hand, but soon (bloodied by the harshness of brambles) strive to withdraw it. It must be said to these people that swimmers, who are thrown back on to the river bank, drained of their strength by the force of swirling eddies, are accustomed (when other help is lacking) to grasp briars with quick exertion; and that the throats of the rich often yearn for rustic dishes when other banquets are excessive; and that many people often adjust their hearing, oppressed by the instruments of every kind of musician – that is, the psaltery and the harp – to listen to the modulation of a gentle pipe.¹²

a key role in the development of the concept of universal mission to all peoples (see Fritze, '*Universalis gentium confessio*: Formeln, Träger und Wege universalmissionarischen Denkens im 7. Jahrhundert') and was strongly influenced by Columbanian monasticism. He founded the monastery of Elnone (St-Amand-les-Eaux) near the confluence of the rivers Scarpe and Scheldt, just south of the present border between France and Belgium. Jonas may have come in contact with Amandus in Bobbio on one of his trips to Rome or through the local bishop of Noyon and Tournai, Acharius, who had been a monk at Luxeuil.

9 Jonas often uses archaic names for peoples and places. *Sicambri* is an ancient name for the Salian Franks. They were a Germanic people based on the right bank of the river Rhine around Cologne and the modern border with the Netherlands. This region had become Frankish by the third century. Julius Caesar mentions the *Sugambri* who lived north of the confluence of the Rhine and Meuse rivers (*Gallie Wars* IV: 16). The name was later associated with the Franks and according to Gregory of Tours in his account of Clovis's baptism bishop Remigius of Rheims addressed Clovis as *Sicamber* when he baptized him. Gregory of Tours, *DLH* II: 31 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 143–45).

10 Cf. Ephesians 6:17 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'

11 Jonas actually states *facta dictis non exsequentur*, which ought to mean 'deeds do not follow from words'; we have translated *facta dictis exaequanda*, which is a phrase from Sallust, *The Conspiracy of Catiline* 3, used in Jerome's *Life of Hilarion* 1, and is presumably what Jonas intended. Jerome is the more likely source, but Gregory of Tours knew Sallust's work and cited it with approval.

12 The passage can be interpreted as a criticism of those who could not live up to the strictness of Columbanus's monasticism. Jonas's model is Paulinus of Milan's *Life of Ambrose* 1. See de Vogüé, 'En lisant Jonas', pp. 71–72.

And if anyone should discover that I have praised someone who is still living, he should not think me a flatterer, but rather one who describes a good deed. Nor do I favour anyone with a panegyric song, but entrust to memory those things that are worth it. Rather, if such a person is still alive, let him not become swollen with pride if he sees my account of the gifts his Creator has so bountifully given to him, lest he damage the firmness of a pure mind by the goading of pride.¹³ For no one can be in any doubt that the approval of flatterers pollutes minds filled with the splendour of virtues, as the Lord speaks to Israel through Isaiah, ‘O my people, they that call thee blessed, the same deceive thee, and destroy the way of thy steps.’¹⁴ Indeed, as the popular saying goes, false praise reproves the wise man, genuine praise rouses him to strive for better things.¹⁵ Therefore, let a praiseworthy reputation honour men in what they have done well, so that a lack of fervour, worthy of censure, may not stain them by a loss of passion. Let them be esteemed by others if what they have done is worthy of imitation, and let them not, afterwards, draw to themselves the damnation of pernicious pride as a consequence of the esteem shown to them for the virtue they have achieved.¹⁶

We have included those things, therefore, which (according to reliable authorities) we have found to have taken place, and which we thought it negligent to disregard.¹⁷ And many things have been omitted which we simply do not remember completely, and we thought it entirely inadvisable to record them (only) partially.¹⁸ I have divided the things I have put in

13 Jonas’s fear that he might be seen as a flatterer could help account for the oddity of *VC* II: 11–22, where he says little about the Abbess of Faremoutiers, Burgundofara, despite the fact that some manuscripts define this section of the text as her *Life*. In so far as he does write about her, it is in the context of Columbanus blessing her as a child (*VC* I: 26: see the notes to the chapter), and Eustasius introducing her to the monastic life (II: 7); he also mentions her brother Burgundofaro, bishop of Meaux (II: 21). To talk about the deeds of a living abbess, however, could be seen as flattery, and might encourage pride. The deadly sin of pride is one which Jonas addresses again in II: 2 and 4. Cf. Gregory of Tours, *DLH* IV: 34 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 228–29).

14 Isaiah 3:12.

15 This resembles a saying of Symmachus cited by Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* VIII: 10.1 and by Caesarius of Arles in his Sermons 217.3 and 236.4.

16 For a story illustrating this point, see *VC* II: 16.

17 Jonas shows a willingness to critique the changes that had taken place within the Columbanian communities since the Synod of Mâcon and the attack on Columbanus’s legacy that this represented. He addresses this fully in the two lengthiest sections of the work (*VC* II: 9–10).

18 It was common for hagiographers to provide repeated assertions as to the veracity

writing into two books so as to remove from their readers the tedium of having everything in a single volume. The first book touches on the deeds of blessed Columba,¹⁹ while the second relates at length the life of his disciples Athala, Eustasius, and others we have remembered.²⁰ We propose that you give these things your careful consideration so that, once they have received your wise approval, they may remove doubt from others.²¹ For if anyone should discover things which have not been properly and clearly expressed and diligently amended, he will think that they should be disregarded, especially if he luxuriates in being fortified by the eloquence of the learned and in being stuffed full of knowledge. But let him know that we are not embarking on this work so that we may think we can equal the ways of the learned. They, soaked with the dew of eloquence, depicted the green fields in flower; in our case the arid earth has scarcely learned to bear scrub. They are rich with a drop of balsam from Engaddi²² and the blossom of spices from Arabia,²³ while in our case butter from Ireland scarcely makes us fat.²⁴ They obtain pepper and nard

of the information they are presenting. Of course, Jonas also omitted facts that he found unhelpful to his case.

19 Columbanus refers to himself as Columba in his letters and Jonas uses both names interchangeably. Columbanus is a Latinized Irish diminutive of the common Irish name Colmán, and means 'little dove'. It was probably his name in religion although it could also have been his baptismal name. It seems that Columb and the diminutive Columbá were both common baptismal names in Ireland before the end of the sixth century. See the first line of *VC* I: 2.

20 This is crucial for our understanding of the structure of the *Life*. The decision to treat the life of the saint in Book One, and then to focus on different communities in the period following the saint's death, was unparalleled in previous hagiography. It appears that the community of Bobbio commissioned Jonas only to write the first book (Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*', p. 200).

21 Jonas seeks the imprimatur from both abbots, so that any doubts still lingering about Columbanus's orthodoxy and his legacy may be addressed.

22 Ein Gedi is an oasis in Israel located west of the Dead Sea. The Jewish town of Ein Gedi, which features strongly in the Book of Samuel, was an important source of balsam for the Graeco-Roman world until its destruction by the Byzantine emperor Justinian in the sixth century. Balsam is a resinous gum of the tree *Commiphora gileadensis*, native to southern Arabia and ancient Judea. The prized resin, used for perfume and for medicinal purposes, was a speciality of Judea and is mentioned by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* XII: 25. Jerome also mentions it in one of his letters (de Vogüé, 'En lisant Jonas', p. 72).

23 Arabia and the Arabs played a key role in the ancient spice trade from India to the West.

24 Jonas uses the term *Hibernia* here for Ireland. Ireland obviously already had a reputation for good butter in the early Middle Ages. Three-thousand-year-old butter has

from India;²⁵ in our case the summits of the Pennine Alps, constantly changing and covered in pines where cold spells freeze with western blasts, barely produce valerian.²⁶ They glory in the variety of their precious stones; in our case it seems rash to boast of the amber of Gaul.²⁷ They draw a great deal of attention to the exotic fruits of the palm tree; in our case, according to the poet, we have ripe apples and soft chestnuts.²⁸ Farewell, beloved fathers, men of vigour and strength.

been discovered from bogs in Ireland exceptionally well preserved, such as the barrel filled with butter from the Iron Age found in Giltown bog in Co. Kildare in 2009 or the 100 pounds of butter discovered in another bog in Co. Offaly in 2011, also from the Iron Age. See Earwood, 'Bog Butter: A Two Thousand Year History'.

25 India was the source of the spice trade. Black pepper is native to south India. It became a widespread but expensive seasoning in the Roman Empire, and Pliny the Elder mentions its popularity in his *Natural History* XII: 14. Spikenard or nard is a large flowering plant of the valerian family that grows in Nepal and in the Himalayas of China and India, and is found at an altitude of between 3,000 to 5,000 metres. The stems can be crushed and distilled into a thick, aromatic oil. It was used as perfume, incense, as a sedative, or for medicinal purposes. The Jews used nard for consecrated incense in the Temple. According to Mark 14:3–9 nard was the costly perfume used to anoint Jesus's head by a woman days before his Passion.

26 The Pennine Alps run from the Valais in Switzerland to Piedmont and the Aosta valley in Italy. They rise up around Susa, the town in western Piedmont in the lee of the Cottian Alps, where Jonas was born. The cold, westerly wind Jonas refers to is probably the tramontana or the mistral from France. Valerian is a flowering plant native to Europe which has been used as a medicinal herb since antiquity. Jonas's descriptions of the Alps are noteworthy for their accuracy and for being one of the few sources for the Alps in the early Middle Ages written by a native of the region. For descriptions of the Alps in Late Antique and early medieval sources, see Winckler, *Die Alpen im Frühmittelalter*, pp. 100–10.

27 Amber from the Baltic Sea had been extensively traded in Europe since antiquity along the Amber Road. Amber beads are commonly found in the archaeology from Merovingian Gaul as the amber trade from the Baltic is well documented. On the Amber trail, see McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, pp. 369–79.

28 Krusch included in his edition the word *Ausonia*, the archaic term for Italy that Jonas uses elsewhere but which does not appear in the two earliest manuscripts, those of St Gallen and Metz, and is probably a later interpolation. Its position in the sentence in any case leaves it unclear as to whether it is Jonas, Virgil, or the fruit that is being described as Italian. The ripe apples and soft chestnuts are those of Virgil, *Eclogues* I: 80, which Jonas has adapted. On his use of Virgil and classical authors, see the Introduction, sections 6 and 10. This set of elaborate comparisons is discussed by Wood, 'The Abbots of Bobbio', p. 132 n. 8: 'The whole passage, with its self-deprecating set of comparisons between what a classical rhetorician could achieve (defined by exotic descriptions of the East) and the best that Jonas could do (defined by the more humble descriptions of the West), shows precisely how skilful Jonas was, despite his own rather idiosyncratic Latin, and the point is rubbed in with the final reference to Virgil. Unlike other authors Jonas makes no attempt to say that rhetorical language is inappropriate for Christian writing; instead he sets out to equal the classics.'

BOOK ONE

HERE BEGIN THE CHAPTER-HEADINGS OF BOOK I²⁹

- [1] Preface to Book I
- [2] The birth of Columbanus and the apparition of the sun to his mother revealed through a vision
- [3] The intelligence and diligence of Columbanus, his setting forth from his native land, and the instructions of his master
- [4] The coming of Columbanus to Abbot Comgall and his departure from Ireland
- [5] His arrival in Gaul and the example of his religious companions
- [6] His reception by King Sigibert, the choosing of a deserted place, and his arrival in Annegray
- [7] The admonition to some people to bring provisions to the man of God and the healing of a woman
- [8] The temptation and testing [faced by Columbanus]. His steadfastness and withdrawal to a more secure desert place
- [9] The scarcity of food and the water that issued from rock
- [10] The discovery of Luxeuil, the building of a monastery there, and the influx of monks
- [11] The advance of Columbanus into the wilderness with Autiernus and the provision of fish
- [12] Divine revelation of the sickness of his companions and the recovery of the obedient
- [13] The harvest collected during a shower and the driving away of the rain from the harvest thanks to the faith of the man of God

29 The list of chapter headings is not present in all the manuscripts. It may well have been written by a later scribe and, as ML notes, this would explain why they so frequently misrepresent the content of individual chapters. In translating the headings we follow Krusch (except for changing ‘Sinilis’ to ‘Comgall’), in that the list does provide a rough guide to what follows.

[14] The conception of a barren woman and the gift of offspring obtained through prayers

[15] Theudegisilus's severed finger, the healing of Winioç's forehead, and the obedience of a raven

[16] The beer that overflowed without loss of the outpouring liquid

[17] The food forbidden to a bear, an increase in the supply of grain in the barn, and the multiplication of bread. The death of the monk Columba delayed by the prayer of the man of God

[18] The respect shown by King Theuderic, the reprimands of Columbanus, and the hostility of Brunhild

[19] The visit of Columbanus to Brunhild and Theuderic, and the scattering of the food and drink, royal displeasure, expulsion from Luxeuil, and the freeing of the condemned

[20] The return of Columbanus to Luxeuil and the blindness of the guards. His expulsion by royal command, separation from companions, and the healing of his oppressors

[21] The healing of a mad man, the punishment inflicted on a man, and the cure of a blind person

[22] The boat held back, a theft uncovered, and the provision of supplies in abundance

[23] The ship driven back by waves and the reverence shown to Columbanus by his enemies

[24] The arrival of Columbanus at the court of King Chlothar and the king's delight

[25] His passage through Paris and his meeting and curing a mad man

[26] The hospitality of Chagneric and Authari, the benediction of Columbanus on their households and consecration of their children

[27] The hospitality of Theudebert: settling in Bregenz and the rebuke to the pagans. The arrival of birds, the allocation of fruits, and the counsel of an angel revealed through a vision

[28] The war between the kings, the revelation of the man of God, and the betrayal of Theudebert

[29] The death of Theuderic and slaughter of his children. The fulfilment of the prophecy made to Chlothar

[30] The arrival of Columbanus in Italy. The hospitality of King Agilulf, and the grant of the choice of a place [to settle]. The construction of Bobbio and death of the blessed man.³⁰

The start of Book I of the Life of the Saint and Most Blessed Columbanus, Abbot and Confessor

[I 1] Preface to Book I³¹

The skill of renowned learned men has preserved the radiant life, shining with an extraordinary splendour, of the leading saints and noble fathers of monks so that the nourishing examples of these ancient men might emit their perfume to future generations. The Eternal Creator of things did this from the beginning of time so that He might commend the everlasting fame of His servants and that their past deeds might leave examples to the future,³² and that by imitating the example of the merits of their predecessors and committing it to memory a future generation might rejoice. Of these blessed Athanasius excellently passed down to our times the memory of Antony; Jerome, that of Paul and Hilarion and of others, whom devotion to the good life made praiseworthy; Postumianus, Severus,

30 This chapter heading is missing from a number of the manuscripts that have the titles for the first twenty-nine.

31 The tradition in hagiographical writing of having two prefaces stems from Evagrius of Antioch, who translated Athanasius's *Life of Antony* from Greek into Latin and who added his own preface to that of Athanasius. Sulpicius Severus imitated this feature when he wrote his *Life of Martin*, and this arrangement is echoed in Jonas's letter of dedication followed by a preface that serves as the first chapter of the work. The *VJ* also has two prefaces, although the first would not seem to be by Jonas. The double preface is a feature in insular Latin saints' *Lives*, such as the anonymous *Life of Cuthbert* and Adomnán of Iona's *Life of Columba*, also from the seventh century.

32 The phrase Jonas uses here for God is *rerum sator aeternus*, which reflects classical and ancient Christian usage. He never simply uses the conventional term *Deus* for God.

and Gallus, that of Martin;³³ and many that of others whom either fame or examples of good works and monuments of virtues have commended, such as, for example, those of the pillars of the churches, Hilary, Ambrose, and Augustine, who, during so many storms of earthly life and vicissitudes of the world, maintained the position of the Church, so that adversity should not stain the true faith, despite the hostile storm and the violent hurricane of the heretics.³⁴ We have followed the examples of these men in a rash attempt, we who, neither aided by our merits nor supported by a flower of eloquence or by a learned spring of knowledge, undertake to put together an account of the deeds of our father, Columbanus, who shines so brightly in our age.³⁵ Nevertheless, the boundlessly liberal Giver of Strength³⁶ will be the judge of our words, who granted to Columbanus both the gifts of His grace and the crown of eternal life.

33 Jonas was writing in an established tradition of hagiography and here he cites a number of authoritative Patristic texts from the fourth and fifth centuries of the founding fathers of the ascetic and monastic tradition. The *Life of Antony*, written by bishop Athanasius of Alexandria around 360, and popularized in the West by Evagrius of Antioch's Latin translation, was one of the formative early works of monastic hagiography. In addition, Jonas lists accounts of the Desert hermits by Jerome, specifically his *Life of Paul* and the *Life of Hilarion*, composed in the 370s and in 390 respectively. He may have known the *Life of Malchus* (he refers to 'other' works by Jerome), although he does not mention it. Jonas also mentions the *Dialogues* on Martin by Sulpicius Severus, where Sulpicius and his interlocutors Postumianus and Gallus discuss the life of the fourth-century bishop of Tours and pioneer of monasticism in Gaul. He does not mention Sulpicius's more popular *Life of Martin*, although he undoubtedly knew it. De Vogüé points out that Paulinus in his *Life of Ambrose* (which Jonas cites in the next sentence) also refers to Athanasius, Jerome, and Sulpicius Severus as models at the beginning of his work, but Jonas substitutes the *Dialogues* for the *Life of Martin*, and adds the reference to Hilarion and others ('En lisant Jonas', p. 72). However, there is little evidence that these texts served as models for the *Life of Columbanus*. Jonas's citation of these texts may rather have been intended to place Columbanus in the tradition of the great monastic saints, as well as emphasising him as a figure of unassailable orthodoxy.

34 Jonas is here referring to hagiographical works concerning great bishops and Doctors of the Church who were regarded as pillars of orthodoxy: Venantius Fortunatus's *Life of Hilary*, written in around 576, Paulinus of Milan's *Life of Ambrose*, written in 422, and Possidius of Calama's *Life of Augustine*, composed in the 430s. Jonas thus sets Columbanus in the tradition of those leading bishops who had defended the true faith against heresy, as well as that of the great monastic founders. This is significant as Jonas was responding to claims that Columbanus and his monastic tradition had been heretical (see *VC* II: 9, 10). Jonas counters this by portraying Columbanus as an impeccably catholic saint.

35 Following the suggestion of ML, we have translated Krusch's *saeculis refulgentem Columbani* as *saeculis refulgentis Columbani*.

36 Another example of Jonas's characteristic use of an elaborate synonym for God.

[I 2] The birth of Columbanus and the apparition of the sun to his mother revealed through a vision

Columbanus, who is also called Columba,³⁷ was born in

the island of Ireland,³⁸ situated at the far end of Ocean,³⁹
 And there it awaits the setting of Titan [the sun],⁴⁰ while the world is turning,
 And light descends into the sea in the western shadows.⁴¹
 There the huge mountains of waves, wild in colour,
 With profuse snaking locks, beat everywhere on the caves,⁴²
 And there, in a cloak that its blue backs suddenly reveal,
 they strike the white foamy seashores, the final curve of the land,
 And do not allow the coast that we know well⁴³
 To release a small questing boat to the salt-swell.
 Above these, yellow-haired Titan descends
 And, with dimmed light wheeling, heads for the regions of Arcturus.⁴⁴
 Following the North Wind, he seeks his rising-place in the East,
 So that, revived, he may give back a pleasant light to the world,
 And, with fire, show himself far and wide to the shivering world.

37 See n. 19, above, for Columbanus's own use of the name Columba.

38 Jonas uses the classical Latin name *Hibernia* for Ireland. The following evocative and complex poem should probably be understood to start at this point: the first and last two lines were probably added by Jonas in order to incorporate the verse better into the *Life*. It is essentially a *Carmen de Hiberniae insula*, a poem about Ireland – indeed, the earliest known poem about Ireland – written by an Irishman. For the translation of the poem we are particularly indebted to ML, GC, Roger Wright, and P. G. Maxwell Stuart. For fuller discussion, see Appendix.

39 Ireland was commonly perceived to be at the furthest edge of the world in classical geography and its peripheral location is often stressed by Latin and Irish writers. Columbanus also plays on this perception in his letter to Pope Boniface IV where he tells him that he has come from the world's end (*Ep.* V: 8; *SCO*, pp. 44–45). In ancient Greek and Roman world views, Ocean is the World Ocean that encircles the world.

40 Titan is a common medieval Latin expression for 'the sun'.

41 Some manuscripts have *ponti*, which would translate as 'into the western shadows of the sea'. We have translated *occiduas pontum descendit in umbras*.

42 *latebras* is unclear: the word can mean 'hiding place, retreat, lair'. It might mean caves on the coast, as suggested to us by GC, or, as Krusch thought (p. 153 n. 1), coastal villages (*hominum in litore sitas*).

43 A clear indication that the poem was composed by someone familiar with the Irish coast.

44 Arcturus is the brightest star in the constellation Boötes and the northern celestial hemisphere and the fourth brightest star in the night sky. It has been known by this name, which means 'Guardian of the Bear', at least from the time of Hesiod (c.700 BC).

Thus, having passed through all the turning-points⁴⁵ of day and night
 with completed course,
 He illuminates the lands filled with his brilliance,
 With his heat rendering the world, wet with dew, pleasant again.⁴⁶

The site of the island, as they say, is pleasant, and lacks the wars of hostile foreign nations.⁴⁷ The Irish, a people who, although without the laws of other peoples, are, nevertheless, flourishing in Christian teaching, inhabit this island.⁴⁸ They are pre-eminent in their faith over all the neighbouring peoples.⁴⁹

Columbanus was born here when the Christian faith was being established among that people so that the faith, which that people in part held as fruitless, might be fertilized by his support and that of his companions with fruitful labour.⁵⁰ But we must not be silent about what took place before his birth, before he beheld the light of this life. For his mother, when she was pregnant and carrying him in her womb, suddenly saw, while deep in sleep in the dead of night, a blazing sun, glowing with amazing brightness, issue from her bosom and bring a great light to the world. After sleep released her limbs and the first light of dawn drove

45 The *meta* was literally the turning point in Roman circuses for chariot racing; they were positioned at each end of the track in the form of large gilded columns.

46 This describes the sun setting off the west coast of Ireland and rising again in the east via the north. The circuit of the Sun seems to be an allusion to Ecclesiastes 1:5–6. The poet probably intended the lines to be read allegorically. For an extended commentary on the poem and the problems it presents, see Appendix on the *Carmen de Hiberniae insula*.

47 Tosi, following Krusch, presented this sentence as the concluding lines of the poem; de Vogüé, arguably more plausibly, translated them as the opening of Jonas's prose.

48 Jonas uses the common Latin term *Scotti* for the Irish. To have laws was a sign of civilization, not to have them a sign of barbarism. Jonas echoes common Greek and Roman ethnographic views on the Irish that they were barbarous – since they were far from the centres of the Greek and Roman worlds. However, Jonas qualifies this by saying that the Irish were devout Christians, and as a result they were no longer barbarous. Cf. Augustine, *City of God* I: 1 on the 'merciful barbarians'.

49 This comment of Jonas's marks the beginning of a shift in perception from classical and late antique pejorative views to the image of Ireland as a holy island, and to the Irish as being particularly holy. Jonas's perception was no doubt the result of his contact with Irish monks in Bobbio, who could voice their native and alternative image of Ireland, rather than that of the ancient Greek and Roman ethnographers.

50 GB sees an allusion to the parable of the 'unfruitful tree': Matthew 3:10, 7:19, 21:19; Mark 11:14; Luke 3:9; John 15:1–17. The dissemination of Christianity in Ireland had been ongoing since the fifth century, when Palladius, sent by Pope Celestine I to the Irish, and the Romano-Briton Patricius (Saint Patrick) both began their work of evangelization.

away the blind shadows from the world,⁵¹ she began to think with internal struggle and, with uncertain joy, to consider in her perceptive mind the meaning of so great a vision. She sought the support of comfort from those of her neighbours whom religious learning had rendered shrewd, asking that the hearts of the wise might unravel the import of her vision. After some time, she received a reply from the consideration of the wise, that she was carrying in her womb a man of noble nature, who would provide what would be useful for his own salvation and opportune for the benefit of associates.⁵²

After the birth of Columbanus, his mother watched over him with such safe-keeping that she would scarcely entrust him even to the known good conduct of her other relatives⁵³ until he was fully grown and could aspire to the practice of good work under the guidance of Christ, without whom nothing good is done.⁵⁴ Nor without reason did Columbanus's mother see

51 Jonas's *caecas mundo surgens aurora pepulit tenebras* echoes Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VII.703: *Lutea mane videt pulsas Aurora tenebris* ('when, in the morning, golden Aurora, chasing away the shadows, sees me').

52 According to the Greek biographer Plutarch, Olympias, mother of Alexander the Great, on the eve of the consummation of her marriage to Philip II, dreamed that her womb was struck by a thunderbolt, causing a flame that spread far and wide before dying away (*Life of Alexander* 2). Christian hagiographers took over such motifs of antenatal premonitions of greatness in order to show that their subjects were predestined to be saints. Columba of Iona's future greatness was also prophesied according to Adomnán by Mochta, a British disciple of St Patrick: 'In the last days of the world, a son will be born whose name Columba will become famous through all the provinces of the ocean's island, and he will be a bright light in the last days of the world' (*Life of Columba*, Second Preface, p. 105). Jonas had a good knowledge of classical authors and he may have been familiar with stories about Alexander that circulated in the Latin world through Quintus Curtius Rufus's first-century *History of Alexander*. Fredegar, who knew the *VC*, includes an antenatal vision in his account of the birth of Theodoric the Great (Fredegar II: 57).

53 This may indicate that he was fostered (although Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', p. 3, did not think so), but if he was, it was only by close kin. Fosterage (Irish *altur*) was common practice for the elite social class in early medieval Ireland (see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 82–83, 115–17). This meagre evidence about Columbanus's family (Jonas mentions nothing about Columbanus's father or whether he had brothers or sisters) suggests that Columbanus probably came from a landowning, though not aristocratic, family. This is consonant with what Jonas subsequently says about his education. From the twelfth century, he was given a noble or royal background, quite typical for a period when the association between noble or royal birth and saintliness was very strong. There is, however, no contemporary evidence for this assumption. Columbanus's family background is discussed by Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', p. 3 and by de Vogüé, 'En lisant Jonas', p. 72.

54 John 15:5.

the resplendent sun emerge from her bosom. Indeed, the members of the Church, the mother of all people, shine with a splendour that is equal to Phoebus,⁵⁵ as the Lord says: 'Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.'⁵⁶ In such a way did Deborah, inspired by the Holy Spirit, once speak to God in prayer, saying: 'But let them that love thee shine, as the sun shineth in his rising.'⁵⁷ For the celestial region blazing with the distinction of the stars is more beautiful due to the abundance of these distinguished lights. Just as the light of the day, increased by the splendour of Phoebus, shines pleasantly on the world, so too does the body of the Church, when she is enriched by the gifts of the Creator, increased by the number of saints and the devotion of their learning, shine forth, so that the profit of succeeding generations comes out of the host of the learned. And as the sun, the moon, and all the stars ennoble the day and night, so the merits of the holy priests strengthen the teachings of the Church.⁵⁸

[I 3] The intelligence and diligence of Columbanus, his departure from his native land, and the instruction of his master

Following his infancy and entering boyhood, Columbanus began to devote himself to the learning of the liberal arts and to the study of grammar with an innate ability. He cultivated these through all his boyhood and adolescent years until he had mastered them with fruitful attention by the time he reached manhood.⁵⁹ But, as noble maturity made him attractive to all, above all in the elegance of his figure and the beauty of his body, the ancient enemy, seeing him grow with such ability, began at length to

55 Phoebus Apollo, the Sun god.

56 Matthew 13:43.

57 Judges 5:31.

58 The reference to the priests (*sacerdotes*) is an allusion to the fact that Columbanus was ordained to the priesthood. Jonas also refers to Columbanus's priesthood in the poem that serves as an appendix at the end of Book One. This current passage makes clearer Jonas's reason for including the elaborate Hiberno-Latin poem about Ireland and the setting sun at the beginning of this chapter and makes explicit the associations between the sun and Christ and Christians.

59 Columbanus began his education while still a boy (between the ages of 7 and 14). Jonas implies that Columbanus was not sent away to be educated, but received his earliest education at home by local teachers. We can deduce the existence of early literate culture in Leinster, the region where Columbanus was born, from the more than thirty vernacular ogham inscriptions. This is discussed by Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', p. 3 and n. 13. For a recent discussion of ogham, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 163–76, and Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, pp. 117–20.

unleash his fatal darts against him so as to ensnare him in his nets if he could. He attempted to arouse in him the lust for sluts, especially those whose physique and superficial beauty plunge the minds of wretched men into dreadful desire. But when the outstanding soldier perceived that he was assailed by such missiles on all sides, and had perceived the flashing dagger of the cunning enemy to be raised against him, having experienced human fragility⁶⁰ to be swiftly set onto slippery slopes – as Livius says, that there is nothing so holy by religion and so enclosed by protection that lust cannot penetrate into it⁶¹ – holding the shield of the Gospel in his left hand, and wielding the twin-edged sword in his right, he is prepared to advance into battle against the monstrous battalions of enemies,⁶² lest, wasting the labour he had devoted, with exceptional ability, to grammar, rhetoric, geometry,⁶³ and the full extent of the divine scriptures, he should engage in the enticements of this world.⁶⁴ And thus the spur to argue is given.⁶⁵

While he was turning these things over in his mind, he came to the cell of a certain religious woman dedicated to God.⁶⁶ Having first greeted her

60 We have followed GB in accepting the text in St Gallen 553, rather than Krusch's reconstruction, and our translation follows GB's. As ML notes, *expertus fragilitatis humanae* might mean 'being devoid of human frailty', with *expertus* being a substitution for *expers*. Given the logic of the sentence, however, we have opted to understand *expertus* as meaning 'knowing about/experienced'.

61 GB notes that the quotation might be from Livius Andronicus, and not the more famous historian – for which reason we have left the name as Livius. For comments on knowledge of Livius Andronicus at Bobbio, see the discussion in the introduction, section 6. The ascription of the phrase to Livy is missing from the early Metz manuscript. As GB says, the parallels that Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 2, p. 27 n. 60 sees between Jonas's text and Cicero's *In Verrem* I, 1, 4 might be part of the borrowing from Livius.

62 Revelation 1:16; Ephesians 6:13–17.

63 This sounds like a version of the standard division of the *trivium*, the first three elements of the Seven Liberal Arts: grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

64 Bullough notes that this may reveal more about Jonas's education than Columbanus's. Jonas only mentions three of the seven liberal arts, defined by Martianus Capella in the fifth century as grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy – the basic curriculum of the Roman educational system. See Cassiodorus, *Institutes* II: 1–2, 6; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, III: 8, 10–13.

65 As ML suggests, it is possible that Jonas is suggesting here that Columbanus's study, especially of rhetoric, made him argumentative.

66 The phrase *cuiusdam religiosae ac Deo dicatae feminae* here is mirrored in the *Rule for Nuns* (known as the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*) 14, *religiosae et deo dicatae animae* that has now been ascribed to Jonas by Albrecht Diem, who is preparing a new critical edition.

respectfully, he then approached her and admonished her so far as he could with his youthful advice. The anchoress, seeing the increasing strength of the young man, says to him, 'I have advanced and set out to fight, as far as I could. It has been fifteen years since I left my home and here sought out a place of pilgrimage.⁶⁷ Since then, with Christ's help, I have set my hand to the plough without looking back,⁶⁸ and had the weakness of my gender not hindered me, I would have sought out a place of superior exile⁶⁹ across the sea. But you, who are burning with the passions of youth, remain on your native soil; out of weakness you lend your ear, whether you will or no, to feeble voices, and yet you believe you will be able to visit women freely? Do you not recall that Adam fell through the persuasion of Eve, that Samson was seduced by Delilah, that David was turned from his former righteousness by the beauty of Bathsheba, and that the most wise Solomon was led astray by the love of women? Flee, young man', she says, 'flee! Escape damnation into which, as you know, many have fallen. Forsake the way that leads to the gates of Hell.'⁷⁰ Touched by these words, and frightened more than you would expect a young man to be, he thanks her for criticizing him in such a manner and, saying farewell to his friends, he sets out on his way. However, his mother, overcome with sorrow, pleads with him not to leave. But he replies, 'Have you not heard: He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me?''⁷¹ He begs his mother, who is blocking his way and clinging to the doorway, to let him go. She, wailing and lying prostrate on the floor, refuses. Columbanus then jumps across both his mother and the entrance and begs his mother to be happy.⁷²

67 Although the concept of ascetic exile (*peregrinatio*) was not unique to the Irish, it became a distinctive feature of Irish monasticism during the course of the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries. The female anchorite distinguishes between two kinds of *peregrinatio*. One could be an exile within Ireland by leaving one's family, kin, and native region. The other, superior, kind of exile was leaving one's country entirely and for life. Such extreme, ascetic heroism was seen by the Irish as a form of martyrdom. On the various concepts of martyrdom as understood by the Irish, see Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom'. On the two distinctions between exile within Ireland and exile overseas, see Charles-Edwards, 'The Social Background to Irish *Peregrinatio*', p. 46.

68 Allusion to Luke 9:62.

69 The word is *peregrinatio*.

70 These biblical *femmes fatales* are the scriptural exempla for men who have been led astray through their attachment to women. Jonas is alluding to the stories in Genesis 3:6; Judges 16:4–21; 2 Samuel 11:2–27; 1 Kings 11:1–8.

71 Matthew 10:37.

72 This harsh anecdote may be inspired by Jerome, *Ep.* XIV: 2, who reproaches Heliodorus for leaving the ascetic life and encourages him again to leave his family home:

He would never see her again in this life, but would follow wherever the way of salvation leads.

Leaving then his native land (which the inhabitants call Leinster)⁷³, Columbanus travelled to a holy man named Sinilis who, at that time, was distinguished among his countrymen for his remarkable piety and for his scriptural scholarship.⁷⁴ When this holy man perceived that Columbanus was innately wise, he gave him thorough instruction in sacred scripture. However, as is common with teachers who attempt to interrogate their pupils in a playful fashion, in order to learn whether their intelligence is burning with the fullness of the senses, or is torpid with the sleep of negligence, Sinilis began to ask his pupil about the meaning of difficult topics. Columbanus, although fearful, was nevertheless wise at heart, and,

‘Should your little nephew hang on your neck, pay no regard to him; should your mother with ashes on her hair and garments rent show you the breasts at which she nursed you, heed her not; should your father prostrate himself on the threshold, trample him under foot and go your way.’ Columbanus revered the works of Jerome and copies of his letters, including the eighth-century Bobbio manuscript, now Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, 954 (*CLA* X, 1492), were to be found in the Bobbio library in the Lombard period. For Columbanus’s knowledge of Jerome, see the classical and patristic index in *SCO*, p. 221; for knowledge of the works of Jerome in the Bobbio library during the Lombard period, see Zironi, *Il monastero*, p. 163. Jonas includes a similar story in *VJ* 6.

73 Jonas here identifies Leinster (Latin: *Lagenorum terra*; Irish: Cóiced Laigen) as Columbanus’s place of birth. This reflects the regional divisions of the time and suggests a native informant. Ireland was divided into five regions – Ulster in the north, Connacht in the west, Munster in the south, Leinster in the east, and, in the centre, Mide, which was the smallest of the regions, but the political and spiritual heart of Ireland. It was there that Tara, the ancient seat of the High Kings of Ireland, was situated. Jonas’s reference to Leinster is the earliest evidence of the name. The early-medieval region roughly corresponded to the modern district of Leinster, and included the coastal area south of the lower River Liffey and of the bogs of Offaly, and east of the hills which separated the river valleys of the Barrow and Nore. This is discussed by Bullough, ‘The Career of Columbanus’, p. 2 n. 8 and by Byrne, *Irish Kings*, pp. 130–64, with map at p. 133.

74 This Sinilis has been identified as Sinell son of Mianiach, abbot of Claein Inis (Cleenish), an island community in Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh, who lived during the second half of the sixth century. He had a reputation for learning and for enforcing strict discipline in his community. He was a disciple of Finnian or Vennianus, Abbot of Cluain Eraird (Clonard in Co. Meath) who is said to have died in 549 and whom Columbanus mentions in *Ep. I*: 7 (*SCO*, pp. 8–9) as having written to the Briton monastic writer Gildas. See Winterbottom, *Gildas, The Ruin of Britain*, fragment 4, pp. 81, 144, 155. The monastic site at Cleenish has recently been surveyed and an enclosure identified. However, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has argued that this Sinilis refers to the abbot of Bangor of the same name whose death is recorded in the *Annals of Ulster* s.a. 610: ‘Mo Sinnu moccu Min and the Computus of Bangor.’ We thank Dáibhí Ó Cróinín for helpful guidance on this point.

so as not to appear disobedient to his teacher, he expounded the questions posed by his present teacher, reversing their roles, not out of an academic arrogance, but out of a willingness to obey his teacher, bearing in mind the words of the Psalmist: 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.'⁷⁵ So great was the treasury of divine scripture that he held established within his breast, that he wrote a polished book on the Psalms while still a young man.⁷⁶ He also produced many other works suitable for singing or useful for teaching.⁷⁷

[I 4] The coming of Columbanus to Abbot Comgall⁷⁸ and his departure from Ireland

Columbanus then decided to join a community of monks so he made his way to the monastery called Bangor.⁷⁹ There the abbot was blessed Comgall,⁸⁰ a man renowned for his great virtue, an excellent father to his monks and held in high esteem for the fervour of his faith and his observance of the regular discipline.⁸¹ There, Columbanus began to dedicate himself completely to prayer and fasting, and to take up the yoke of Christ (which is light for

⁷⁵ Psalms 80:11.

⁷⁶ Columbanus wrote this work during his *adolescentia*, that is between ages 14 and 28. Ninth-century library catalogues from St Gallen and Bobbio list a Commentary on the Psalms ascribed to him, but this work is now lost. Attempts to identify it with extant works have generally not been accepted. See Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', pp. 4–5, n. 16.

⁷⁷ One of these may be Columbanus's Easter hymn *Precamur patrem* that survives only in the late seventh-century *Antiphonary of Bangor*. Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', p. 5; Lapidge, '*Precamur patrem*: a rhythmical poem by Columbanus?'

⁷⁸ Many of the manuscripts name Sinilis rather than Comgall here, which is clearly an error.

⁷⁹ Bangor was founded, according to the *Annals of Ulster*, in 555 or 559 on the south side of Belfast Lough (Co. Down).

⁸⁰ Comgall was born in Dalriada in Co. Antrim and studied under Finnian of Clonard. He is mentioned three times in the *Life of Columba* as a founder of monasteries (I: 49, III: 17) and Adomnán also relates how Columba had a vision of the drowning of some of Comgall's monks while they were sailing on Belfast Lough (III: 13). Comgall's death is noted in the *Annals of Ulster* under 601 and 602. Comgall and his strict rule at Bangor are mentioned in the *Antiphonary of Bangor* which was compiled during the abbacy of Cronan (680–91) at Bangor but later brought to Bobbio. Comgall is also linked to Columba in the *Martyrology of Notker*, compiled at St Gallen in the 890s, where he is represented as the heir of Columba and the teacher of Columbanus, who in turn was the master of Gallus. Notker thus presents a pedigree of Irish saints stretching back to Columba of Iona. See Sharpe, *Life of St Columba*, p. 314 n. 205, and also J.-M. Picard, 'Schaffhausen, Stadtbibliothek, Generalia I', p. 66.

⁸¹ Monastic life meant living under the Rule of an abbot. We have translated the phrase

those who bear it),⁸² and to follow Christ by denying himself and taking up his cross,⁸³ so that he, who would become a teacher to others, should, by enduring mortification in his own body, show more fully by example what he himself had learned from religious teaching, which he had taught should be enacted by others.⁸⁴

After spending many years in the monastery, Columbanus began to long for ascetic exile mindful of the Lord's command to Abraham: 'Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.'⁸⁵ He confessed to his venerable father Comgall his heart's desire and the longing enkindled by the fire of the Lord, concerning which the Lord speaks in the Gospel: 'I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I, but that it be kindled?'⁸⁶ Columbanus made his ardent feelings known to the abbot, but he did not find what he was hoping for in the father's reply. It was difficult for the venerable Comgall to suffer the loss of so great a comfort.⁸⁷ After some time, however, Comgall began to come around to the idea and to think about how he should not consider his own needs more than what would be useful to others. This did not transpire without the will of the Almighty, who had instructed his novice for future combat so that the glorious warrior would bring home triumphs from his victory, and lead home phalanxes of slaughtered enemies with their splendid booty.⁸⁸ Having called him, he

regularis disciplinae cultu as 'observance of the regular discipline' but it could also be translated as the 'observance of the monastic life'.

82 Matthew 11:29–30, cited by Columbanus, *Rule for Monks* IX (*SCO*, pp. 138–39).

83 Luke 9:23. Jonas cites this again in *VC* I: 6.

84 Columbanus deals with the topic of mortification in *Rule for Monks* IX (*SCO*, pp. 138–41).

85 Genesis 12:1.

86 Luke 12:49.

87 Columbanus would have been a long-standing member of the community at the time he chose to undertake ascetic exile: later continental tradition from Wetti's *Life of Gall* in the ninth century notes that Columbanus was the teacher of the monastic school at Bangor. He may have been a teacher of the computus, a method for calculating the date of the moveable feast of Easter. See Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', p. 8.

88 Jonas often uses warlike analogies for the spiritual life as did Columbanus. In *Sermon* X: 3, Columbanus writes: 'we now force the kingdom of heaven by strength and violence, and this we snatch somehow, as it were, from amidst our enemies' hands in the middle of the field of strife, and as it were in the bloodstained soil of battle ... For this time is a time of war; for no one should expect rest in warfare' (trans. Walker, *SCO*, pp. 103–05). The language of spiritual warfare has been seen as characteristic of Columbanus's monasticism (Stancilffe, 'Columbanus's Monasticism', p. 20). Cf. Jonas's comments in *VC* I: 27 on Theudebert's

gave him a decision, which although sad for himself, was beneficial for others: he would confer on him the bond of peace,⁸⁹ and, as a source of comfort, companions for the journey, renowned for their devotion. Having assembled the community of brothers, Columbanus asked the aid of the prayers of all so that the giver of piety might give them comfort on their coming journey.

Columbanus is twenty⁹⁰ when he sets out on his journey and under the guidance of Christ makes for the seashore with twelve companions.⁹¹ There they wait on the mercies of the Almighty, to see if the intended plan, if it is in accordance with His wishes, might succeed. Knowing that the spirit of the all-merciful Judge was with them, they embark in a boat and set out through the straits into the uncertain sea-lanes and the calm high seas. With fair winds blowing, they quickly reach inlets on the coast of Brittany.⁹²

reception of the Luxeuil monks who left to follow Columbanus: 'Many of the brothers had already come to him from Luxeuil, whom he received as if they were enemy booty.' We are indebted to ML for improving our translation.

89 Perhaps to be understood as the kiss of peace. In the Gospels Jesus greets his disciples with a kiss (Luke 7:45) and both Saints Peter and Paul advise Christians to greet each other with a kiss (Romans 16:16; 1 Peter 5:14). It became part of the eucharistic Liturgy and was customarily exchanged in the first several centuries mouth to mouth. The modern Irish word for 'kiss', *póg*, is derived from the Latin *pacem* '(kiss of) peace', as noted by Sharpe, Adomnán of Iona, *Life of St Columba*, p. 287 n. 128.

90 The age of twenty that Jonas gives as the age in which Columbanus undertook his ascetic exile was surely modelled on the *Life of Antony* as Athanasius notes that Antony was twenty when he decided to lead a religious life. Columbanus must have been in his forties when he left Ireland, so this is a nice example of the rhetoric of hagiographical precedent. A number of manuscripts have amended Columbanus's age from twenty to thirty (the age of Christ at the start of his ministry), although the earliest of them, St Gallen 553 and Metz 1, both have twenty. See Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', p. 9 n. 31.

91 Columbanus's desire to undertake the ritual of ascetic exile was modelled on the example of Christ and his exhortation to leave everything and follow him. Columbanus's literal imitation of Christ was given added weight by Comgall's entrusting him with twelve companions for his religious odyssey. These monks would have been, like Columbanus, seasoned monks of Bangor. They constituted an elite corps. Some of them are known from Jonas and from Columbanus's own writings: Gallus (*VC* I: 11), Domoalis (*VC* I: 9, 19), another Columbanus (*VC* I: 17), Libranus, and perhaps bishop Aid (Columbanus, *Ep.* IV: 3–4 (*SCO*, pp. 29–31)). See Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', p. 9 n. 31.

92 Jonas has *ad Brittanicos ... sinus*, which appears again in *VC* I: 21 *Brittanicoque sinu*, in the context of Columbanus's arrival at Nantes and the coast of Armorican Brittany, where he was to await deportation back to Ireland. In his letter to his monks written at Nantes Columbanus also refers to his location (*Ep.* IV: 9 (*SCO*, pp. 36–37)). This use of *Brittanicus* to refer to Brittany rather than Britain is remarkably early: the normal designation for the whole of north-western France would have been *Armorica*. This raises the possibility that

There they rest a short time, recovering their strength and anxiously assessing their plans, in uncertainty of mind.⁹³ Finally, they decide to set foot on the fields of Gaul,⁹⁴ and diligently to find out the moral state of the people there. If salvation should be sown there,⁹⁵ they would stay awhile, but if they found their minds hardened by the darkness of arrogance, they would continue on to the neighbouring peoples.⁹⁶

[I 5] The arrival of Columbanus in Gaul and the example of his religious companions

Leaving the coast of Brittany behind them they enter Gaul. At that time, whether due to the numerous foreign enemies or through the negligence of

Jonas was thinking of south-western Britain and Brittany as a single unit. For the context, see Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, pp. 21–26, 56–74. Columbanus's sea route would have taken him along the east coast of Ireland before crossing to southern Wales and following the British coast down to Cornwall and then making land on the north coast of Brittany: traditionally he made land at what is now St-Coulomb. From there he travelled to the mouth of the Loire, either overland or by sea. It may be significant that he stayed in a region that was later thought to include the final resting place of Gildas, St-Gildas de Rhuys, and which would appear to be in the *sinus Brittanicus*.

93 It is unclear how long Columbanus and his companions remained in the area: Bullough ('The career of Columbanus', pp. 10–11) estimated that the saint arrived on the continent in 590/91 (following the evidence of Columbanus, *Ep.* II (*SCO*, pp. 12–23)), that he moved to Annegray in 592, and to Luxeuil in 593 or later. Jonas implies that they did not have a fixed destination in mind or a clear plan of where they would go. That they headed to eastern Francia and not to Neustria (as the British saint Samson (of Dol) had done), is probably to be explained by the fact that it was King Guntram of Burgundy who controlled the *civitates* of the northern bank of the lower Loire (see Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, pp. 63–64, and introduction, above, sections 2 and 4), while the Austrasian Childebert II controlled the cities of the southern bank. Columbanus's decision to approach the Burgundian or Austrasian court might also have come about through contact with monks in Brittany who may have told him about Carantoc and the monastery of *Salicis* which was established in the Vosges.

94 We have followed de Vogüé in translating *planta terere*. Jonas distinguishes between Brittany and Gaul, a distinction which reflects the absence of Merovingian control beyond Rennes and Vannes, even though Brittany was theoretically part of the Frankish kingdom: for the reality of relations between the Merovingian courts and the Bretons in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, see Fredegar IV: 11, 20, 78 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 10, 13, 66), with the comments of Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, pp. 56–74.

95 As GC points out to us, the image begins in the previous sentence with *arva Gallica*, implying that they were assessing the quality of the earth.

96 This desire to preach to neighbouring peoples is found in Columbanus's own writings (*Ep.* IV: 5 (*SCO*, pp. 30–31)).

the bishops, the fervour of the religious life had almost been extinguished there.⁹⁷ All that remained was the Christian faith. The medicines of penance and the love of mortification were scarcely, or only in a few places, to be found there.⁹⁸ Wherever he passed through, the venerable man, Columbanus, would proclaim the word of the Gospel.⁹⁹ And he was well received by the people because the example of his virtues confirmed at the same time what the exercise of eloquence embellished, through the enlightening doctrine of preaching. So great was their humility that, in contrast to the worldly who try to seek rank from honours, Columbanus and his companions in contrast strove to outdo one another in the practice of humility, mindful of His command that, 'He who humbles himself, shall be exalted',¹⁰⁰ and that of Isaiah, 'To whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor and little,

97 Jonas's description of Francia at this point is tendentious, and is concerned primarily to set the scene for his account of Columbanus's impact on Francia. It is difficult to imagine what he had in mind as constituting foreign threats, which were minimal in the late sixth century, and he can scarcely be intending to describe the situation in the first two decades of the fifth, when Vandals, Alans, Sueves, and Goths all entered Gaul. Equally, his picture of the episcopate is intended to warn the reader that the bishops who will oppose Columbanus could not compare with him. This picture of the state of the Merovingian Church has been accepted uncritically by numerous scholars, who have not examined the surviving evidence for either monasticism or the episcopate in the 590s. That Jonas was aware that the sixth century was not the period of degradation imagined here is clear from his account in his *VJ* which gives a vibrant portrait of Gallic monasticism: see the discussion in the introduction, sections 3 and 11.

98 The phrase 'medicines of penance' (*poenitentiae medicamenta*) appears several times in the *Life* (*VC* I: 5, 10; II: 1, 8, 15, 19, 25). See also Columbanus, *Penitential* B, praef. (*SCO*, pp. 172–73) and Leo I, *Ep.* 168: 2. The phrase is used above all by Caesarius of Arles, occurring in almost 10 per cent of the sermons edited by Morin (see the discussion in the introduction, section 3, above). The phrase becomes a hallmark of Columbanus's particular brand of ascetic Christianity. The term encompasses the whole system or ethos of Columbanian monasticism. At this point in the text Jonas does not seem to be referring to the more specific system of tariffed penance which was developed in British and Irish monastic circles in the sixth century and which Columbanus championed. This system, which was codified in Penitentials, or manual handbooks of sins and their particular antidotes in the form of performative penance, brought the analytical precision of the doctor to the issue of sin and its alleviation.

99 Jonas presents Columbanus as a preacher as well as a monastic founder. Thirteen of his sermons, composed in Bobbio, have survived: see Stancliffe, 'The Thirteen Sermons Attributed to Columbanus and the Question of their Authorship'. His preaching can be seen as constituting 'internal mission' (as defined by modern revivalist Christians), though this is not an early medieval concept, and can perhaps better be described as pastoral care; Columbanus did not, however, undertake external missions to hitherto unconverted pagans.

100 Luke 14:11.

and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my words?¹⁰¹ So great was their piety, so great was the love in all, that, being of one accord in what they wanted and in what they did not want,¹⁰² modesty and moderation, gentleness and lenience in all things spread over all. For them, the sin of indolence and discord was detestable, while they struck at the haughtiness of arrogance and vainglory with the harsh blows of chastisements, and the poisons of anger and of envy were routed by their keen diligence. So great was their virtue of patience, their tenderness of love, their cultivation of gentleness that you could not doubt that the gentle Lord dwelt openly among them.¹⁰³ If they found that anyone among them was falling into sin, they all at once and in equal measure sought to correct the sinner by their reproofs. They had everything in common¹⁰⁴ and if anyone tried to take anything for himself, he was removed from the company of others and punished by the imposition of penance.¹⁰⁵ No one dared to return evil for evil to his neighbour or to say a harsh word,¹⁰⁶ so that you would have perceived that the angelic life was being led by these men in their everyday lives. So great was the grace that overflowed in this blessed man that in the houses of those with whom he was staying for a while he would plant in the minds of everyone the desire to lead a religious life.

[I 6] His reception by King Sigibert, the choosing of a deserted place, and his arrival in Annegray

At length the fame of Columbanus reached the court of King Sigibert, who at that time ruled nobly over the two Frankish kingdoms of Austrasia and Burgundy.¹⁰⁷ The name of the Franks is held in greater respect than

101 Isaiah 66:2. The verse is cited by Columbanus, *Sermon* II: 2 (SCO, pp. 70–71).

102 This phrase of Sallust (*Conspiracy of Catiline* 20.4) was often cited by Christian authors such as Jerome, Cassian, and Pope Leo the Great. Columbanus also cites it in *Ep.* IV: 2 (SCO, pp. 26–27), to which Jonas alludes here. See de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 111 n. 5.

103 An echo of Columbanus's *Rule for Monks* VII: 29 (SCO, pp. 132–33) alluding to the harmony of the desert monks of Egypt.

104 Allusion to Acts 4:32 and to the model of the early Church in Jerusalem which in turn served as the model of communitarian distribution of wealth espoused by the monastic ideal. Jonas also alludes to this again in *VC* I: 10 in relation to the foundation of Luxeuil and in *VC* II: 23 on the concord between Abbots Athala and Eustasius.

105 Here Jonas clearly does use *paenitentia* in the sense of penance; cf. Columbanus, *Communal Rule* I: 2 (SCO, pp. 144–45).

106 *Communal Rule* V (SCO, pp. 150–51).

107 The Metz manuscript has Hyldebert, while one other has Childebert: the rest all have

that of the other peoples who live in Gaul.¹⁰⁸ When the holy man with his companions appeared before the king, he was well received by him and his courtiers on account of his great religious learning. At length, the king began to request that Columbanus remain within Gallic territory and that he should not abandon them by going on to other peoples; and he promised to provide everything that he asked for. Columbanus then says to the king that he would not become rich on the wealth of others, but that he would follow the example of the preacher of the Gospel, in so far as the weakness of the flesh did not prevent him: 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.'¹⁰⁹ To such objections, the king supplies the answers: 'If you desire to take up the cross of Christ and to follow him, seek out the peace of a greater wilderness. But do not leave our dominion to go to the neighbouring peoples: provide what is useful for the increase of your reward and of our salvation.' Having been given the choice, Columbanus was persuaded by the king's arguments, and sought out a wilderness. There was at that time a vast wilderness called the Vosges in which there was a fortress, long since in ruins, called *Anagrates*,

Sigibert. While the last of these is certainly an error, Childebert might be factually correct, since he ruled Austrasia from 575 to 596 and Burgundy from 593 to 596, while his father, Sigibert, only ruled in Austrasia from 561 to 575. A yet more likely ruler over the region in which Columbanus initially settled is Guntram, Childebert's uncle, who ruled Burgundy until 592/93. Columbanus arrived in Francia in 590 or 591. Since Luxeuil was later within the Burgundian kingdom of Theuderic II we should probably assume that the area had previously been subject to Guntram, and had thence passed to Theuderic's father Childebert. The latter, however, may well have been the ruler who granted Luxeuil to Columbanus, after Guntram's death in 593. See the discussion in the introduction, section 4, and Wood, 'Jonas, the Merovingians, and Pope Honorius', pp. 105–06, 109–13. In the light of the reading of the Metz manuscript, one might ask whether it was Jonas or his copyists who introduced the name of Sigibert. The late seventh-century *Life of Sadalberga* rightly names Childebert as the ruler at the time of Columbanus's arrival, as does the later *Life of Agilus*. It would appear that the correct name was acceptable in monastic circles, and this might indicate that Jonas himself wrote Childebert, and that the reading of the Metz manuscript reflects the original text.

108 The stress Jonas places on the Franks here is interesting. Certainly, they were the dominant group in the Merovingian kingdom: but Jonas may also have been deliberately playing down the Burgundians at this point, since Columbanus's Frankish foundations were in the border zone of Austrasia and Burgundy. He may also have been distancing himself from the inhabitants of Gaul: he did not identify himself as a Frank even though Susa, the town in which he was born, had been under Frankish control since 575. On the meaning of the word *Francus* in this period, see Wood, 'Defining the Franks'.

109 Luke 9:23.

according to ancient tradition.¹¹⁰ When the holy man came to it he settled there with his companions despite the vastness of the harsh solitude and the rocky nature of the terrain. He was content with little food, mindful of the proverb that man does not live on bread alone, but is satisfied by the word of life which abounds in nourishment. For the one who has partaken of such food will never go hungry.¹¹¹

[I 7] The admonition to some people to bring provisions to the man of God and the healing of a woman¹¹²

While the man of God was staying in this place with his companions suddenly a violent fever began to afflict one of the brothers, either as a test of faith or brought on by some sin. Although there were no reserves of food except for what might be supplied from tree-bark and herbs, he nevertheless began to inspire the souls of all to give themselves over to fasting and prayer for the sake of the sick man. After three days of fasting, and having nothing with which to restore their wearied bodies, suddenly they see a man standing before the gates with horses laden down with supplies of bread and vegetables.¹¹³ He told them that he had been driven by a sudden compulsion of heart to bring food from his own resources to those who were, for the sake of Christ, sustaining themselves on so little

110 The site of Annegray in the commune of La Voivre was probably part of the royal fisc and was given to Columbanus either by Childebert II or Guntram. It is generally thought to have been a Roman routeway fort of the Late Empire, as such forts were constructed near the *limes* to guard the roads. On Annegray, see O'Hara, 'Columbanus *ad locum*: The Establishment of the Monastic Foundations', as well as the comments in the introduction, section 4, above.

111 Deuteronomy 8:3.

112 We have translated the chapter heading as if it refers to a single individual, which is what the narrative implies. As ML points out, the Latin is actually in the plural. This may be an indication that the headings are not by Jonas, but added by a somewhat inattentive reader.

113 The reference to gates suggests that Annegray had an enclosure or *vallum* that bounded the sacred space of the monastery from the world outside. Columbanus prescribed a penalty for anyone who left the gates open at night. The *Rule of Benedict* and the *Rule of the Master* also mention gates. For the importance of walls in the construction of monastic identity, see Dey, 'Building Worlds Apart: Walls and the Construction of Communal Monasticism from Augustine through Benedict'. This miracle of the provision of food has parallels in other works of Latin hagiography such as in the *Life of Frontonius* and in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* where an outsider provides Benedict and his community with food during times of shortage (e.g. *Dialogues* II: 21, trans. Zimmerman, p. 88). The similar miracle stories are noted by de Vogüé, 'En lisant Jonas', p. 73.

in the wilderness. Having given what he had brought to the man of God, he began humbly to ask the holy man to pray to the Lord on behalf of his wife who, for the past year, had been burning with so great a fever that it now seemed unlikely she would be restored to the living. The holy man did not wish to deny consolation to the man, who was asking with humble and anxious heart, so, having gathered together the brothers, he seeks the Lord's mercy for her. When he and the community had completed their prayer, immediately the woman, who was openly in great danger of death, was restored to health. When her husband had received the blessing of the man of God and had returned home, he found his wife sitting there. Having asked her at what time the fever had left her, he discovered that she had been healed at that very hour¹¹⁴ when the man of God had prayed to the Lord on her behalf.

After a short time, in which they offered pious appeasement as well as atonement of the mind to their leader Christ, through punishment of the flesh, fasting, and mortification of the body, and during which they strove to preserve the pristine condition of their religious practice, all carnal pleasure was banished through their unyielding harshness, so that they unquestionably transformed the corrupter of all virtues into the destroyer of all crimes. Nine days had already passed in which the man of God and his companions had taken no food other than tree-bark and forest herbs. But the goodness of eternal virtue tempered the scantiness of the food and in a vision He warned a certain abbot called Carantoc¹¹⁵ (who was in charge of the monastery named *Salicis*)¹¹⁶ to bring provisions to his servant, Columba,¹¹⁷ dwelling in the vastness of the wilderness. Therefore, rising

114 Cf. John 4:52–53.

115 Carantoc is a British name, which raises the issue of whether there was a British monastic settlement in the area prior to Columbanus's arrival, and whether he learnt of this in Brittany.

116 The monastic site of *Salicis* remains unknown, despite attempts by scholars as far back as Dom Jean Mabillon in the seventeenth century to identify it. Mabillon thought it to be Le Saulcy, about 15 km south of Annegray, but this is unlikely because the flat terrain of the area would have rendered it prone to flooding from the adjacent river L'Ognon. Mabillon's hypothesis was challenged by Bruno Krusch in 1911. A more likely candidate is Montesaux (= *Monasterium Salicis*) which is 10 km south of Annegray and is on higher ground above the river L'Ognon in the commune of Mélisey. An alternative, preferred by Kerlouégan ('Présence et culte des clercs irlandais et bretons entre Loire et Monts Jura', p. 191) is Saulx, 10 km north-east of Lure.

117 Jonas uses Columba and Columbanus interchangeably although he generally prefers Columbanus. The saint himself never referred to himself as Columbanus, but always as Columba.

from his sleep Carantoc summons his cellarer, named Marculf,¹¹⁸ and he tells him about the admonition. The latter advised the abbot, 'Do what has been demanded of you.' Then Carantoc instructs Marculf to go and to prepare everything he could to take to the blessed Columbanus. When the carts had been laden with supplies Marculf sets out, but when he reaches the edge of the wilderness he cannot find any path open to him. At length he resolved that if this was the will of God He would open up the way for the horses out in front; the power of Him who commanded would reveal the way.¹¹⁹ What wonderful power! The horses proceed, their hooves treading an unknown path through the rough terrain, and going straight ahead they arrive at the gates of blessed Columbanus at Annegray.¹²⁰ Amazed, Marculf followed in the tracks of the horses, and coming to the man of God presents what he had brought. Columbanus gives thanks to the Creator because He did not neglect to prepare a table for His servants in the wilderness.¹²¹ Therefore, having received Columbanus's blessing, Marculf returned the way he had come and disclosed to all what had happened. Then crowds of people and hordes of the sick began to visit Columbanus in order that they might recover their health and to seek help in all their sicknesses. As he was unable to refuse them, he attended to all their demands. Through the power of prayer and relying on divine aid, he healed the sicknesses of all who came to him.

118 *PCBE* IV, 2, p. 1249 lists two other Marculfs. Sadly, chronology prevents any of them from being the compiler of the well-known formulary.

119 As ML notes, the Latin poses a problem here, because *eques* does not mean 'horse' but rather 'rider'. The sequel of the narrative, however, makes it clear that Jonas refers to horses here, not riders. A number of manuscripts read *equis* rather than (*a*)*equitibus*, and *equis* should probably be printed and translated. On the other hand, it seems that Jonas understood *eques* to be synonymous with *equus*, as noted by B. Löfstedt, 'Bemerkungen zur Sprache des Jonas von Bobbio', p. 94.

120 This miracle account is modelled on the *Life of Frontonius* 6–8, as noted by de Vogüé, 'En lisant Jonas', p. 74. The *Life of Frontonius* is to be found in the *Vitae Patrum* or *Lives of the Desert Fathers*, a fourth-century collection of hagiography that was popular in the West. Bobbio had a manuscript of this work in its early medieval library, now Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, F 84 Sup. (*CLA* III, 341). The name Annegray is missing from the Metz manuscript.

121 Psalms 77:19–20. Also cited in *VC* I: 17.

[I 8] The temptation and testing faced by Columbanus. His steadfastness and withdrawal to a more secure deserted place

One day, in the same parts, the man of God was walking through the dark woods far from anywhere and, with a book slung from his shoulder,¹²² was thinking to himself about some point of Sacred Scripture. Suddenly, a thought occurred to him: which would he rather choose, to fall into the snares of men or to be mauled by wild beasts? While the harsh idea that had struck him pressed on his mind, he decides, protecting his forehead repeatedly with the sign of the Cross and praying, that it was better to suffer from the ferocity of wild beasts, without any sin on the part of others, than from the madness of men who would lose their souls. While thinking this, he sees twelve wolves approach and stop in front of him, to his right and left.¹²³ He remained completely still, saying: 'O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me!'¹²⁴ They come towards him and snap at his clothes. But as he remained steadfast, they leave the fearless man and wander off through the woods. Having safely overcome this trial, Columbanus continues on his way through the forest. But before he had gone very far, he hears the voices of a band of Sueves, who at that time were involved in brigandage in the region, wandering along the paths.¹²⁵ And so,

122 Columbanus would have carried books in a satchel. The *Life of Columba* II: 8–9 has two miracle accounts in which book-satchels feature. For surviving medieval book-satchels from Ireland, see Waterer, 'Irish book-satchels or budgets'. In the tenth century, Bobbio claimed to have the satchel and cup of Columbanus, which were both revered as relics, and which were brought to Pavia in 929, when the community processed with the body of the saint to the royal court in Pavia in an attempt to reclaim land that had been taken from the monastery by the local bishop and count. The translation to Pavia and the context in which the miracle accounts were composed are discussed by O'Hara and Taylor, 'Aristocratic and Monastic Conflict in Tenth-Century Italy: The Case of Bobbio and the *Miracula Sancti Columbani*'. The surviving fifth-century Bible, Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale G.VII.15, is thought to have been owned by Columbanus and brought by him from Ireland to Bobbio.

123 The number of wolves specified by Jonas is significant. In biblical exegesis, twelve was the number that symbolized the community. Cf. Revelation 21:9–18.

124 Psalms 69:2. This is cited by Columbanus in his *Communal Rule* IX (*SCO*, pp. 138–39), and by John Cassian in *Conferences* X: 10.

125 The *Suevi* were a group of widely scattered Germanic peoples first mentioned by Julius Caesar and later by Tacitus. They were a periodic threat to the Romans along the Rhine and were active along the Rhine frontier and in south-west Germany. The modern-day Swabia (Schwaben) derives its name from them and is the region adjacent to the Vosges. Jonas mentions the *Suevi* again in *VC* I: 27 in relation to Bregenz where the *Alamanni* are said to be neighbours of the *Suevi*. The terms *Alamanni* and *Suevi* were used interchangeably for the

having overcome this trial again through his resolution, he finally drove off misfortune. He did not know for certain whether the trickery of the Devil had invented this, or it had actually taken place.¹²⁶

Another time, when Columbanus had left his cell and had penetrated deep into the wilderness by a longer route, he comes across an immense rock with steep sides with its surface rough with boulders so that it was inaccessible to man. There, Columbanus notices a hollow space in the side of the rock. He enters in order to explore its hidden recesses, and finds inside the cave the den of a bear, with the bear itself there. Then, with gentleness, he commands the beast to depart: 'And do not', he says, 'return to these haunts.' The gentle beast departs and did not dare afterwards to return to its lair.¹²⁷ This place was more or less seven miles away from Annegray.¹²⁸

[I 9] The scarcity of food and the water that issued from rock

At this time, when Columbanus was leading a hermit's life in this cave it was usual for him, as the feast days of the Lord and the sacred solemnities of the various saints were approaching, to leave the company of others and retreat into the fastness of the woods. He kept to the remote places of the wilderness so that with sound mind and without the anxiety of worries he could give himself over completely to prayer and direct all

same ethnic group. The *Suevi* also appear in the later seventh-century *Life of Eligius* II: 3, 7, 38 in the diocese of Tournai in modern day Belgium.

126 This statement may be modelled on either Jerome, *Life of Paul* 7, or Athanasius, *Life of Antony* 11, both of which Jonas cites in his Preface: de Vogüé ('En lisant Jonas', p. 74) thought it more likely to have been from Jerome.

127 The expulsion of the bear by the saint recurs in *VV* 6, where Vedast expels one from the city of Arras, and may be modelled on Jerome, *Life of Malchus* 9, where a lioness cedes her den to the saint and his companion. Cf. *Lives of the Desert Fathers* 6, 2, 15, as noted by de Vogüé, 'En lisant Jonas', p. 74.

128 Local tradition identifies the grotto of St-Coloman above Ste-Marie-en-Chanois as the site of Columbanus's hermitage. The site resembles Jonas's description with a cave, a spring, and an elevated position overlooking the surrounding countryside. It is, however, only 3 km from Annegray, which can be seen from the site. Jonas is usually quite accurate about distances and his comment that it was 7 miles from Annegray raises doubts about whether the identification is correct. It might be, however, that Jonas gives the distance from Luxeuil (which is about 7 miles), or that in Columbanus's time the area between Annegray and the grotto would have been marshland which would have necessitated circumnavigating the Breuchin flood plain. On the site, see Roussel, *Colomban et l'épopée colombanienne*, vol. 1, pp. 114, 122 n. 30.

his efforts to the religious life.¹²⁹ He had so little to eat that you would think him scarcely alive. His only source of nourishment was a small amount of wild herbs and the tiny fruits which grow in this wilderness and which the people call blueberries.¹³⁰ For drink, he had water. As he was always occupied with the concerns of others, he was unable to do this regularly, but he partially achieved his desired intentions occasionally. Columbanus had in his service a little boy called Domoalis who alone would report to the father when particular issues arose in the monastery and, in turn, would inform the brothers as to the saint's instructions.¹³¹ He was therefore in the aforementioned cave of the great rock that did not allow easy access from another place. When he had been there for many days the boy in question began to wonder quietly to himself why he did not have water to hand but had to bring it with great effort up the steep slope of the mountain, exhausting his knees.¹³² Columbanus says to him:

129 After his banishment in 610 Columbanus wrote to his monks in Luxeuil: 'You know that I love the salvation of many and seclusion for myself, the one for the progress of the Lord, that is, of His Church, the other for my own desire.' (*Ep.* IV: 4; trans. Walker, *SCO*, pp. 28–29). The practice of retreating to a hermitage was common for late antique monastic founders and Columbanus's frequent retreats into the wilderness play an important role in the *Life*, where they serve to show the ascetic heroism of the saint and his command over the natural world. A similar site to that of the one near Annegray has also been identified near Bobbio as a hermitage of Columbanus. This hermitage cave-site at Coli features prominently in the tenth-century *Miracles of Columbanus*, where the author notes that Columbanus would spend Monday to Friday and also the whole of Lent at his hermitage. Despite Columbanus's love of the eremitic life, his monasticism was resolutely communal, and he and later abbots were suspicious of monks who wanted to pursue an eremitic vocation. It was considered the exclusive preserve of experienced ascetics, and Columbanus's eremitic retreats are indicative of his long experience in the monastic life. In his letter to Pope Gregory the Great he asked for advice about renegade monks who break their vows and become hermits without their abbot's permission (*Ep.* I: 7; *SCO*, pp. 8–9). This was obviously an issue within the Columbanian communities, as Jonas later recounts how Luxeuil (or perhaps Bobbio) monks left the community against the wishes of Abbot Athala to become hermits and were divinely punished for their disobedience (*VC* II: 1).

130 Latin: *bullugas*. They are still called 'belues' or 'blues' in the region. Jonas refers to them again in *VC* I: 27. See de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 117 n. 2.

131 This is the *minister* or personal assistant to the abbot. Jonas mentions a number of Columbanus's assistants who served him at different times, such as the monks Chagnoald and Athala. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* II: 5 also mentions that the boy Placidus served as the personal assistant to Benedict. Jonas himself served as the personal assistant to the Bobbio abbots Athala and Bertulf.

132 Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* II: 5 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 68) also notes the difficulty experienced by Benedict's monks at Subiaco in getting water from the lake below because

‘My son, examine the rockface for a little while, being mindful that the Lord caused water to pour from rock for the people of Israel.’¹³³ Domoalis, obeying his father, began to strike at the rock face.¹³⁴ Then the holy man at once cast himself down on his knees and entreats the Lord with his prayers that He would provide what was useful for his needs. At length a great power, responding to his prayers, answers the pious supplicant. Soon water came and a spring began to flow continually, which is still to be seen there today.¹³⁵ Not without reason does the merciful Lord respond to the prayers of His saints, who have crucified their own desires on account of the command of His teachings. They have such faith that they do not doubt that those things which they have asked for through His mercy will be fulfilled, as He himself promised when he said: ‘If your faith were the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mountain, “Move from here to there”, and it would move; nothing would be impossible for you.’¹³⁶ And elsewhere: ‘Everything you ask and pray for believe that you have it already, and it will be yours.’¹³⁷

[I 10] The discovery of Luxeuil, the building of a monastery there, and the influx of monks

As the number of monks increased greatly, Columbanus began to consider that he should look for a better place in the same wilderness in which he might build a monastery. He found a settlement that had once been well fortified about eight miles away from Annegray and which was known as *Luxovium* since ancient times.¹³⁸ There were hot baths that had been

of the steepness of the site of Benedict’s monasteries. The problem was solved when a spring was miraculously discovered nearby after Benedict prayed on the spot.

133 Numbers 20:7–11.

134 Latin: *rupem cedere adgressus*. As ML notes, Merovingian spelling does not make clear whether the verb here is *cedere* (‘to leave’) or *caedere* (‘to strike’). See *Mittelateinisches Wörterbuch* s.v. where *cedere* means ‘to leave/ depart’. If one understands the verb in this sense the phrase would mean ‘to leave the rock face’. Given the context, we have assumed that Jonas intended *caedere*.

135 At the grotto of Saint Colombanus there is a spring that flows in front of the cave. This miracle is paralleled in Gregory of Tours, *LVP* XI: 2 (trans. James, *LVP*, p. 90) and in Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* II: 5 (trans. Zimmerman pp. 67–68), with which it shares close similarities, as noted by de Vogüé, ‘En lisant Jonas’, p. 75.

136 Matthew 17:19.

137 Mark 11:24.

138 This is the first appearance of the name in the historical record. New archaeological discoveries at Luxeuil have shown that this site was occupied up to Columbanus’s arrival

built with great skill and many stone images that littered the nearby wood, which in the ancient times of the pagans were honoured by the wretched worship and profane rites of the pagans, and to which they made offerings in detestable ceremonies.¹³⁹ Only a multitude of wild animals and beasts, bears, buffaloes,¹⁴⁰ and wolves haunted that place. The venerable man settled there and started to build a monastery. Crowds of people from all over were attracted there by his fame and they desired to dedicate themselves to the religious life,¹⁴¹ so that the great multitude of monks that gathered could scarcely be contained in one monastery.¹⁴² The children of nobles everywhere strove to come there so that, by despising the trappings¹⁴³ of the world and by scorning the pomp of present wealth, they might seize eternal rewards.¹⁴⁴ Blessed Columbanus realized that everywhere people

and that there had been a Christian presence at the site since the fifth century. This is also effectively stated by Bobolenus in the late seventh-century *Life of Germanus of Grandval* 6, which notes that Luxeuil was constructed out of old buildings (*monasteriorum antiquorum opere constructum*). Jonas is following a hagiographical motif here in accentuating Luxeuil's desolation in order to enhance his image of the saint as an ascetic hero.

139 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* II: 8 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 74), where Benedict appropriates for the site of his monastery of Monte Cassino, the old temple of Apollo, above the fortified town of Cassino, which was still frequented by the local people. Here Jonas gives the impression that this was also a pre-Christian cult site that was no longer in use, which seems also to have been the case at Annegray.

140 A reference to the European bison or the wisent which became extinct in Western Europe during the course of the Middle Ages. Its range encompassed all lowland Europe, extending from the Massif Central to the Volga and the Caucasus. It became extinct in most of Gaul as early as the eighth century, although the species survived in the Vosges and the Ardennes up to the fifteenth century, and has since been reintroduced into several countries in Europe. The animals also appear in Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards* II: 8, where they graze on the Mons Regis, from which Alboin surveyed the lands to the south he would conquer. Paul relates how a hide from one of these bisons killed on the Mons Regis was so large that fifteen men could lie on it.

141 *Cultus religionis* as in *VC* I: 5, and in the *Rule for Nuns* (*Regula cuiusdam patris ad virgines*) 1, 24, which is plausibly ascribed to Jonas.

142 The eighth-century *Life of Walaric* 8 estimated that there were 220 monks in Columbanus's three foundations in the Vosges, while in the tenth century Adso of Montier-en-Der, in his *Life of Berchar* 6 and *Life of Waldebert* 3, reckoned there were 600 monks in Luxeuil alone. These figures suggest sizeable communities although they might not be an accurate guide given the tendency for medieval authors highly to overestimate their numbers; but see Wood, 'Entrusting Western Europe to the Church, 400–750', pp. 67–69, on numbers in early medieval monasteries.

143 Following ML, *faleramenta* (from *phalerae*) means 'ornaments' or 'vanities'. See *phaleramentum* in Niermeyer.

144 The influx of nobles recalls *Dialogues* II: 3 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 66), where Gregory

were running to the medicines of penance¹⁴⁵ and that the confines of one monastery could not hold such a band¹⁴⁶ of religious without difficulties. Although they were of one mind and heart,¹⁴⁷ this way of life was not suited to such numbers. He seeks by enquiry another place with a bountiful supply of water and he builds there another monastery, which he names *Fontanas*.¹⁴⁸ In this monastery he placed priors as superiors¹⁴⁹ whose religious integrity was in no doubt.¹⁵⁰ After he had settled the community of monks in these places, he divided his time between them, and filled with the Holy Spirit he set down¹⁵¹ a Rule which they were to follow.¹⁵² The

the Great notes how nobles from Rome came to visit Benedict in Subiaco and left their sons with him as oblates after his fame had spread throughout the surrounding countryside and he had founded twelve monasteries with twelve monks in each around Subiaco.

145 *Paenitentiae medicamenta* ('medicines of penance') as in *VC* I: 5, and discussed by de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, pp. 55–56 (but see the note on *VC* I: 5, above). The meaning of the term here connotes the willingness to make reparation for past sins through sincere conversion in the monastic life.

146 For Jonas's use of the term *cohors*, see de Vogüé, 'En lisant Jonas', p. 68.

147 Acts 4:32. Used again in *VC* II: 23 and by Columbanus himself in *Ep.* IV: 2 (*SCO*, pp. 26–27).

148 Fontaine-lès-Luxeuil lies about 6 km north-west from Luxeuil in rich agricultural land. The monastery was dedicated to Saint Pancras and like Annegray served as a priory of Luxeuil up to the French Revolution. Little remains of the priory. Jonas mentions many monks working in the fields and the monastery may have served as the agricultural centre for Luxeuil (see *VC* I: 13).

149 These are the *praepositi* or Priors, literally 'those who were put in charge', who were normally senior monks who had charge of a group of monks within the monastery. The term appears in Columbanus's *Communal Rule* VII and in his *Ep.* IV: 2 (*SCO*, pp. 150–51 and 26–27), where the *praepositus* assumes command of the whole community when the abbot is absent; in this case Athala after Columbanus had been banished from Luxeuil. They are also mentioned by Gregory the Great in *Dialogues* II: 8: when Benedict decided to leave Subiaco due to the enmity of the local priest Gregory notes that he reorganized the monasteries he had founded and appointed priors to assist governing them.

150 The same expression is used by Jonas in *VC* II: 5 and in the *Rule for Nuns* (*Regula cuiusdam patris ad virgines*) 14, 24.

151 As ML notes, *condere* can mean 'to create/ establish' and 'to compose/ draw up'. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* 1, 'condere'. The next sentence, however, indicates that Jonas is here talking of the writing of a *Rule*.

152 Jonas emphasizes the sanctity of Columbanus's monastic instructions by reference to the Holy Spirit. Two Rules are ascribed to Columbanus: his *Rule for Monks* (*Regula monachorum*) and *Communal Rule* (*Regula coenobialis*), both of which were written while he was still in the Vosges region. The *Rules* are edited and translated in *SCO*, pp. 122–68. See the discussion by Stevenson, 'The Monastic Rules of Columbanus'.

sensible reader or listener realizes in this the excellence of the holy man and the extent of his religious instruction.¹⁵³

[I 11] The advance of Columbanus into the wilderness with Autiernus and the provision of fish

And so at that time a certain brother called Autiernus starts to ask permission to travel to Ireland as an ascetic exile.¹⁵⁴ Columbanus says to him: 'Let us go into the wilderness so that we might learn the will of God, whether you should undertake the journey that you desire, or whether you ought to remain in the community.'¹⁵⁵ They set out at once taking with them a third member, a youth called Sonicharius (who is still alive)¹⁵⁶ and they came to their destination in the wilderness with only one loaf of bread for their food.¹⁵⁷ When twelve days had passed and not even a crumb of

153 Jonas here mirrors Gregory the Great's comment about Benedict and his Rule: 'He wrote a Rule for Monks that is remarkable for its discretion and its clarity of language. Anyone who wishes to know more about his life and character can discover in his Rule exactly what he was like as abbot, for his life could not have differed from his teaching' (*Dialogues* II: 36; trans. Zimmerman, p. 107).

154 *Peregrinandi causa* ('for the sake of ascetic exile'), on which see *VC* I: 4. Autiernus's desire to go to Ireland is Columbanus's ascetic exile in reverse (though it should be noted that the Metz manuscript names neither Autiernus nor *Hibernia*). From his name Autiernus would appear to be a Briton (personal communication from Thomas Charles-Edwards), suggesting that we are dealing either with someone who joined Columbanus in Britain or Brittany or who was perhaps among the Britons already in the Vosges at the time of Columbanus's arrival. He would not be the first Briton to wish to spend time as an ascetic in Ireland. He does, however, seem more unusual in a Frankish context. Later in the seventh century the Frankish noble turned monk Wandregisel wanted to undertake ascetic exile to Ireland after he had spent some time in Bobbio (*Life of Wandregisel* 9), and the Merovingian king Dagobert II was famously sent to Ireland as an exile following the coup of his Pippinid mayor of the palace Grimoald: *Liber Historiae Francorum* 43.

155 The practice of ascetic exile was not undertaken lightly. It was normally not embarked upon by monks without considerable experience of the monastic life and was dependent on the consent of the abbot (cf. *VC* I: 4; II: 1). Columbanus effectively imposes a ritual fast to discern the will of God. This is echoed in *VC* I: 4. Fasting was an important component of the monastic life. It was common practice in the Middle Ages to fast on both Wednesday and Friday. In modern Irish, the word for Thursday derives from *dé dardóin*, 'day between two fasts'. Rigorous fasting was obviously a feature of Irish monastic practice as an Irish canon attributed to Saint Patrick, but more probably of sixth- or seventh-century date, calls for leniency when fasting. For the near contemporary practice of fasting on Iona, see Adomnán, *Life of Columba* I: 26; II: 41; III: 8. Adomnán praised Columba's habit of strict fasting.

156 The name Sonicharius is absent from the Metz manuscript.

157 Presumably not Columbanus's hermitage near Annegray but somewhere on a rise

bread remained and the time for breaking their fast is approaching, they are commanded by the father to go through the steep cliffs and down to the bottom of the valleys, and to bring back whatever they could find to eat. They went joyfully through the curving valley to the banks of the Moselle, and saw a fish trap, which had been made by shepherds in the past, set in the water. And when they approached closer they found five large fish, and taking up three, which were still alive, they carry them back to the father. But he says, 'Why did you not bring five?' They replied that they found two dead, and so they left them. Columbanus tells them, 'You shall not eat these until you bring those that you left.' The monks, astonished at this foreknowledge of divine grace, quickly retrace their steps, blaming themselves for leaving the manna¹⁵⁸ that they had found, and so they were ordered to prepare the food. For Columbanus, filled with the Holy Spirit, had known all along that the Lord had provided this food for him.

At another time Columbanus was staying in this same wilderness, but not in the same place.¹⁵⁹ Fifty days had passed¹⁶⁰ and only one of the brothers was with him, a man named Gallus.¹⁶¹ Columbanus commands

nearer to the Moselle, which is about 15 km north-east from Annegray. On this, see Roussel, *Saint Colomban et l'épopée colombanienne* 1, p. 142 n. 32; de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 120 n. 2.

158 Psalms 77:24. Despite the injunction in Acts 15:29 not to eat meat of strangled animals (cf. Preface to Gildas's *Penitential* 13), one could eat fish that was found dead (Theodore of Canterbury, *Penitential* 21). Noted by de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 121 n. 3. See also Laporte, *Le pénitentiel*, pp. 44–45 and Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian hagiography', p. 66. The use of biblical terms relating to the Israelites of the Exodus here and in *VC* I: 27 reveals Jonas's attempt to apply these repertories of identification from the Old Testament to Columbanus's monks, particularly when they are in the wilderness or travelling. Similar language was applied by Hilary of Arles to the community of Lérins in his *Life of Honoratus*. On the use of such language, see Leyser, "'This Sainted Isle': Panegyric, Nostalgia, and the Invention of "Lerinian Monasticism"'.

159 This episode is situated closer to Annegray and Luxeuil, where the Breuchin passes, and not far from the L'Ognon, which runs 10 km south-east from Annegray, and about 18 km south-east from Luxeuil. Noted by de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 121 n. 4.

160 The comment on the length of time is not in the Metz manuscript.

161 This Gallus, first mentioned here by Jonas, has traditionally been identified as the Irish companion of Columbanus, who, according to a series of saints' *Lives* written in the ninth century for the monastery of St Gallen in Switzerland, fell out with his abbot in 612 on the journey south to Italy, and remained behind as a hermit in the Steinach valley close to Lake Constance, which later became the site for the great monastery of St Gallen. Even so he appears as a source of information, and one whom Jonas knew personally. The earliest fragmentary *Life of Gall* may have been written already in the seventh century by an Irishman (Müller, 'Die älteste Gallus-Vita'). Jonas does not mention whether Gallus was Irish or not,

him to go to the Breuchin to catch fish. Gallus set out but thought it better to go to another river, the Ognon.¹⁶² When he came there, he cast his net in the river. He saw that there was an enormous number of fish there, but the net did not catch any of them. It was as though they came up against a wall and turned around. Gallus laboured there the whole day without catching anything. He returned and tells the father about his vain labour. Columbanus rebukes him for his disobedience, asking why he had not gone to the place he had been instructed. He told him once more: 'Hurry up, and go to the place you were told about.' Gallus then came to the place and cast his net into the water. And so many fish filled the net that he could scarcely haul it out because of the weight. Gallus himself often told us this story.¹⁶³

[I 12] Divine revelation of the sickness of his companions and the recovery of the obedient

On another occasion Columbanus was staying in the aforementioned cave, from which he had expelled the bear, and for a long time he mortified his body through prayer and fasting. He learnt through a revelation that the brothers who were at Luxeuil were afflicted by various kinds of sicknesses and that none remained but those looking after the sick. Columbanus then left the cave and went to Luxeuil. When he saw all the sick monks, he commands that all should get up and go to thresh out the harvest on the threshing-floor with a flail.¹⁶⁴ Then those whose consciences burned with

and the question of his ethnicity continues to be the subject of much scholarly debate, which has either supported his Irish ethnicity or proposed that he was a local Alamannian. On the authenticity of the claim that Gallus was an Irish disciple of Columbanus, see Berschin, 'Gallus Abbas Vindicatus'; Prinz, 'Columbanus, the Frankish Nobility and the Territories East of the Rhine', p. 81. In his *Martyrology*, written in St Gallen in the 890s, Notker writes that Gallus's name in Irish was Cellach. Notker provides further evidence of men with Irish and Latin names: Columbanus's abbot at Bangor Comgall was also known by the Latin name Faustus. For the most recent discussion of the issue, see the collected essays in Schnoor, *et al.*, *Gallus und seine Zeit: Leben, Wirken, Nachleben*.

162 L'Ognon was close to the monastery of *Salicis*.

163 This statement that Jonas had often heard the story from Gallus has been thought to suggest that the Gallus in this story is not the same as the man who remained near Lake Constance. While there is no evidence that Jonas ever visited Gallus there, close links existed between St Gallen and Bobbio: Zironi, *Il monastero longobardo di Bobbio*, pp. 95–103.

164 The verb used is *cedere/caedere*, which could mean 'to cut' or 'to strike': the noun, *virga*, however, means a rod or flail. The action seems, therefore, to be one of threshing rather than harvesting, and this fits the description of it taking place *in area*, 'in the courtyard'. In the next chapter, which begins with the word *interea*, which should indicate that he is dealing

the fire of obedience¹⁶⁵ arose and coming to the threshing-floor began, with the grace of faith, to thresh the grain with a flail. The father, seeing that faith and the grace of obedience was abundantly present in these monks, says to them: 'Allow your limbs weakened by sickness to rest from their labour.' The obedient ones are amazed at their full recovery as no sign of pain remained. Columbanus orders them to prepare the tables so that all might restore themselves with great joy.¹⁶⁶ The disobedient are then criticized, their weak faith attacked, and the continuation of their sickness is foretold. What revenge! For more than a year the punishment of sickness plagued the disobedient to such an extent that they almost died. They completed this period of penance from the time they had chosen to be disobedient.

[I 13] The harvest collected during a rainstorm and the driving away of the rain from the harvest thanks to the faith of the man of God

Meanwhile the time had come for gathering the harvest into the barns, but strong winds did not prevent the clouds from piling up. Necessity pressed, so that the head of the mature corn should not rot upon the stalks, having dropped its grain. The man of God was at the monastery at Fontaine where a new field had yielded a rich crop. Gusts of wind rushed in with severe downpours and the clouds in the heavens never let up from dropping rain on the earth. In the midst of this the man of God thought anxiously what to do. Faith strengthened his mind and taught him to entreat favourable [weather]. Columbanus accordingly summoned everyone and ordered them to cut the harvest. They are bewildered at the father's command, yet none expresses his thoughts to him. All came with their scythes in the midst of the downpour, they cut the grain, and watch to see what the father would do. Columbanus places at the four corners of the harvest four very religious men, Cominus, Eunocus, and Equoanans, who were Irish, and the fourth,

with the same season, Jonas is unquestionably describing harvest. Here, however, he seems to be dealing with events after the grain has been harvested.

165 This miracle account is used to illustrate a core precept of Columbanus's *Rule*, which Jonas comes back to again and again; that of unstinting obedience. In his *Rule for Monks* I, Columbanus states: 'At the first word of a senior, all on hearing should rise to obey, since their obedience is shown to God, as our Lord Jesus Christ says: He who hears you hears Me. Therefore if anyone hearing the word does not rise at once, he is to be judged disobedient' (trans. Walker, *SCO*, p. 123). Gallus's fault similarly lay in his disobedience to his abbot's unreasonable command.

166 For meals as special rewards after work, see *VC* I: 17; II: 25; Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* III: 14 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 132).

Gurganus, a Briton.¹⁶⁷ Having arranged them, he himself with the others began to cut the grain in the middle. Oh wonderful power! The shower began to disperse from the harvest and the rain fell in every direction apart from the field where the warm sun beat down on the harvesters in the middle and a strong warm wind blew for as long as they gathered in the crop. In such a way faith and prayer caused the rain to disperse and sunshine to come out among the downpours.¹⁶⁸

[I 14] The conception of a barren woman and the gift of offspring obtained through prayers

At that time there was a duke named Waldelenus who ruled over the people who inhabit the land between the barrier of the Alps and the wooded region of the Jura.¹⁶⁹ He had no children. It was as Juvenius said about Zachariah

167 Jonas's precision concerning the ethnicity of these monks is noteworthy. These are *seniores*, the senior monks: they may have been among Columbanus's original core of monks who came with him from Ireland and Brittany, although they are not among those who can certainly be so identified: Bullough, 'Career of Columbanus', p. 9 n. 31. Again, however, the names do not appear in the Metz manuscript.

168 The four monks placed at the corners of the field may have been intended to shield the harvest from the four winds. For a discussion of this notable miracle account within the context of *tempestarii* (rain-makers) and Christian magic, see Borri, 'Nightfall on Ravenna: Storms and Narrativity in the Work of Andreas Agnellus'. This miracle account has a parallel in *Vita Caesarii* II: 27 (trans. Klingshirn, pp. 56–57); Gregory of Tours, *DLH* IV: 34 (about a young monk who is left in charge of the grain in the field) (trans. Thorpe, pp. 228–29); also Gregory of Tours, *LGM* 83 (trans. Van Dam, pp. 108–09). Other storm miracles occur in *DLH* III: 28; X: 29 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 185–86, 591). Gregory the Great (*Dialogues* III: 11–12; trans. Zimmerman pp. 125–28) also relates how rain did not touch the ship that carried the body of the dead saintly bishop Cerbonius on its journey from the island of Elba to its burial place in Populonia, and how rain did not fall within the circle where bishop Fulgentius had been ordered to stand by hostile Goths, while a thunderstorm raged around him.

169 As ML points out, *incolent* might be in the future tense, which should imply that the people 'will inhabit the Jura': MW notes that it could be subjunctive. We have chosen to think that *incolent* stands for the present tense, *incolunt*. Fredegar IV: 13 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 10) notes that in 591 Wandamar became duke of the Transjura, the territory east of the Jura (*Ultraioranus*) in present day Switzerland, and records his death in 604 (IV: 24, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 16). It may be that Wandamar and Waldelenus are one and the same, but Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, p. 105, sees them simply as members of the same kin-group. The family seat was in Besançon. Waldelenus's son, Chramnelenus, was appointed duke after his father's death and is noted as being *ex genere Romano* (Fredegar IV: 78, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 65). The name Waldelenus is borne by several people who had close associations with Luxeuil and who probably came from the same noble family. Waldebert, the third abbot of Luxeuil, was a member of this Transjuran group (*Waldeleni*).

and Elizabeth: 'That the gift might be all the more welcome to those who had given up hope.'¹⁷⁰ He set out with his wife Flavia,¹⁷¹ a woman noble both in birth and in wisdom, from the town of Besançon to see blessed Columbanus. Both implored him to intercede on their behalf to the Lord, for they had great wealth, but no heir to whom they could leave their inheritance after their death. The holy man says to them, 'If you promise to dedicate the gift of the Lord to his name and will give him to me to raise from the font, I will beseech the Lord for you that you may have not only the one whom you dedicate to the Lord, but that, after your pledge, you may have as many children as you wish.' They joyfully promise that they would comply with his commands, asking only that he will not cease to implore the Lord's mercy for them. Columbanus, filled with the gifts of God, replies that he had this in hand, so long as they should not try to break their agreement. Wonderful to relate! Barely had they returned home, when the future mother becomes pregnant and awaits the gift of the Creator. When she had given birth to a son, she brings him to the holy man and shows him the gift achieved through his prayers, and gives thanks to the Creator who, in such a way, grants to the petitions of His servants their sought-for gifts. The holy man took the boy in his arms and consecrated him to the Lord. He took the child who had been washed in the sacred font, and gives him the name Donatus. Then he gives him back to his mother to be suckled. Afterwards he grew up in this same monastery where he was instructed in wisdom.¹⁷² He became

See Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 99–103. Columbanus in *Ep.* IV: 2 (*SCO*, pp. 26–27) mentions a Waldelenus, whom he must have held in high regard, because he was to assume the office of prior if Athala chose to leave Luxeuil and follow Columbanus (as it turned out). Walker (*SCO*, p. 27 n. 2) notes that this Waldelenus was the son of Amalgair, Duke of Lower Burgundy, and was the nephew of Duke Waldelenus and cousin of Donatus, later bishop of Besançon. He became the first abbot of Bèze. For Waldelenus, see Ebling, *Prosopographie der Amtsträger des Merowingerreiches*, p. 229.

170 Gaius Vettius Aquilinus Juvenius was a fourth-century Hispano-Roman Christian poet. He wrote about 330. His poem on the Gospels, which Jonas cites, is a verse history of the life of Christ largely drawn from the Gospel of Matthew. It was a popular work during the Middle Ages, and there was a copy in Bobbio during the Lombard period (Vatican, Apostolic Library, Vat. Lat. 5759), noted by Zironi, *Il monastero longobardo di Bobbio*, p. 163.

171 There was a Roman element in the family: Fredegar IV: 78 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 65) notes that Waldelenus's and Flavia's son Chramnelenus was 'of Roman origin'. Both Flavia and her other son, Donatus, bore Roman names. Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 99–103.

172 Child oblation was common in the early Middle Ages. *Rule of Benedict* 59 stipulates how children of the nobility and the poor should be received as oblates. On child oblation, see de Jong, *In Samuel's Image*.

the bishop of Besançon and, still living, rules over the same cathedral.¹⁷³ Later, out of love for blessed Columbanus, he founded a monastery for men following the Rule of Columbanus called *Palatium*, on account of the defences of the old walls there.¹⁷⁴ And after him the Bountiful Giver, to fulfil the promise made by His servant, gave them [Waldelenus and Flavia] another son called Chramnelenus who, distinguished by his nobility and wisdom, was appointed to the dukedom following the death of his father.¹⁷⁵ Although a layman, he was, nevertheless, conscientious in his love for the Creator. For he too, out of love for the holy man, founded a monastery under the Rule of Columbanus in the Jura forest, beside the little river Nozon, and placed Siagrius there as abbot.¹⁷⁶ The Lord also gave (in addition to His original gift) two daughters who were both nobles in the world and devoted to the fear of Christ.¹⁷⁷ After these gifts their mother, Flavia, following the death of her husband, founded a convent in the aforementioned town of Besançon.¹⁷⁸ She gave it every form of protection and assembled there a

173 Donatus became a monk of Luxeuil and later bishop of Besançon by 626/27, when he appears in the canons of the council of Clichy as a signatory. He wrote a Rule for Virgins, which drew on the Rules of Columbanus, Caesarius of Arles, and Benedict, on which, see Diem, 'New Ideas Expressed in Old Words: The *Regula Donati* on Female Monastic Life and Spirituality'.

174 This foundation was situated in what seems to have been an official Roman residence, named *Palatium*, which had fallen into private hands. It was later known as the monastery of St Paul, and adopted the rule of Columbanus. Given the fact that Donatus was conferred to Columbanus as a child-oblate, it is notable that Jonas devotes very much less attention to him and his family's foundations than he does to Burgundofara and Faremoutiers.

175 One of the dukes mentioned by Fredegar (IV: 78, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 65) who took part in the campaign against the Gascons in 636/37: he is identified as being *genere Romanorum*. He also took part in the battle of Autun in 642 (Fredegar IV: 90, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 77–78). On Chramnelenus, see Ebling, *Prosopographie*, p. 110.

176 This has been identified, with some reservations, as the monastery of Romainmôtier, founded in the fifth century by the brothers Romanus and Lupicinus, which was refounded by Chramnelenus: Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, p. 149. The original founders are discussed by Gregory of Tours in his *LVP* I (trans. James, pp. 27–34) and by the anonymous author of the *Life of the Jura Fathers*. Abbot Syagrius is unknown, although there are a number of men from Burgundy who bore this name at the end of the sixth century. One became bishop of Autun and was a correspondent of Gregory the Great, while another, Count Syagrius, was sent by King Guntram to Constantinople in 587 (Fredegar IV: 6, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 6).

177 Sirudis and Aquilina. Sirudis became abbess of her mother's foundation of Jussamoutiers while Aquilina married Duke Amalgarius (see Ebling, *Prosopographie*, p. 110; Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 101–03).

178 This was the convent of Jussamoutiers whose second abbess, Sirudis, was Donatus's sister. Donatus wrote his Rule for this community.

large community of nuns. The grace of the man of God was enflamed in them to such an extent that, scorning all the trappings¹⁷⁹ of this present life, they pursued only the cult of the Omnipotent [God].

[I 15] Theudegisilus's severed finger, the healing of Winioc's forehead, and the obedience of a raven

If we try to include some things that may seem trivial to some people, we expose ourselves to the barking of the critics.¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the generosity of the Creator shows His favour mercifully in small things as well as in great. Nor, in small things, does He delay to turn His ear of compassion, just as, in more important matters, He heeds the desires of those who pray to Him.

One day the venerable man came to cut the harvest with the brothers in the field¹⁸¹ which they call *Baniaritia*.¹⁸² While a gentle and favourable south wind blew they were cutting the crop with sickles, when one of the monks, called Theudegisilus, cut his finger with his blade so badly that it was held on by nothing more than a bit of skin. Then, when from a distance the man of God sees Theudegisilus standing, he orders him to get on with the work with the others. But then the monk tells him what has happened. Columbanus rushes to him and smears the cut finger with his saliva, and immediately heals it.¹⁸³ Columbanus then orders him to quickly resume his work with renewed effort. Joyful, Theudegisilus set back to work twice as hard and got on with cutting the hay more actively than all the others. This was a man who before had been downcast at having his finger cut off. Theudegisilus himself told me about this and showed me his finger.¹⁸⁴

On another occasion the saint accomplished something similar at the monastery of Luxeuil. A priest from the diocese called Winioc, the

179 *Faleramenta*, as in the *Ep.* to Waldebert and Bobolenus, and *VC* I: 10, and II: 1, 9, 12.

180 For Jonas's concern that his work would be criticized, see also *VC* II: 16, 25.

181 *Calmen*: Niermeyer translates as 'high plain lying waste' or 'heath'. The *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch* gives the meaning as *portio terrae* ('piece of land') or 'field', which is the meaning we have accepted. Jonas is the earliest citation provided by Niermeyer, but the other references are to charters, suggesting that the word, although unusual in literary Latin, was well established as a term describing types of property.

182 Perhaps Le Banney to the north of Luxeuil (Roussel, *Saint Colomban et l'épopée colombanienne* 1, p. 142 n. 27).

183 Athala works a similar miracle in *VC* II: 3. Cf. Mark 7:33.

184 Jonas would seem to have met Theudegisilus at Luxeuil. The monk is also mentioned as being there in *VC* I: 17.

father of Bobolenus, who is now abbot of Bobbio, came to see blessed Columbanus.¹⁸⁵ The saint was in the forest with the brothers in order to exploit the timber. When the aforesaid Winioch arrived and was marvelling at the force with which they split the trunk of an oak with their mallet and wedges, one of the wedges came flying from the trunk and cut him in the middle of his forehead, and drew gushing waves of blood from his veins. Columbanus, seeing the bone exposed and the blood streaming, at once fell on the ground in prayer. Then rising he healed the wound with his saliva so that hardly a trace of a scar remained.

Another time when he (the blessed Columbanus) had come to eat at the aforesaid monastery of Luxeuil, he laid his gloves, which the Gauls call *wantos*,¹⁸⁶ and which he was accustomed to wear when working, on a stone which was outside the door of the refectory. As soon as it became quiet, a raven, a thievish bird, flew up and snatched away one of the gloves in its beak.¹⁸⁷ After the meal, the man of God went outside to get his gloves. When everyone was wondering amongst themselves who could have taken [the glove], the holy man declared that no one would dare to touch it without his permission¹⁸⁸ except that bird which was sent out by Noah and did not

185 *Ex parochianis* ('from the diocese') is unlikely to indicate that he was a parish priest: in the canons of Orléans, 545, c. 6, *parrocianus* would appear to mean diocesan. Certainly, a fully fledged parish system had not yet been established, though pastoral care clearly existed. Although it is tempting to think that Winioch was a Briton, and to link him with the monastery of Carantoc (cf. *VC* I: 7), according to Wolfgang Haubrichs (personal communication), the name is more likely to be Burgundian: his son, Bobolenus, certainly has a Germanic name. According to the *Versus de Bobuleno abbate*, he was *Atticorum ex genere oriundus nobili* ('descended from the noble family of the Attici'): Haubrichs suggests that *Attici* may be a classicizing version of *Chattuari*, one of the north Frankish tribes. One might add that there is a *Pagus Attoariensis* in the diocese of Langres. Following this line of argument, Winioch was a Burgundian nobleman, who already had a son before he encountered Columbanus: he thus joins the list of mature men who became monks after a life at court. It is, of course, also possible that he was of British extraction, and that, having travelled to one of the Frankish courts, he married a Frankish noblewoman.

186 Jonas uses the Latin term *tegumenta manuum* ('covering for the hands') for gloves. *Wantos* becomes the modern French 'gants'. Jonas is making a minor point about the distinction between the terms that he and the Gauls used for a 'glove'. This is an indication of the fact that he was writing from an Italian perspective.

187 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* II: 8 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 71), where a raven takes away poisoned bread which had been given to Benedict by the jealous priest Florentius.

188 *sine comeatu* ('without his permission', or 'without its companion'): as GC points out to us in *VC* I: 17, the normal classical sense of the word *comeatus* is 'companion': and this may be the meaning here. On the other hand, Niermeyer prefers to translate the word in this instance as 'permission'. The same expression is used in the *Rule for Nuns* attributed

return to the ark.¹⁸⁹ And he added that the raven would not be able to feed its young if it did not quickly restore what had been rapaciously stolen. Then, while everyone was waiting, the raven flies into their midst bringing back what it has stolen in its wicked beak. And it does not attempt to fly away again, but humbly in the sight of all and forgetful of its wild nature awaits punishment. The holy man instead orders it to depart. Oh wonderful power of the Eternal Judge! He supplies such great power to His servants that they are glorified not only with the honours accorded by men, but even by the obedience of birds!

I have this on the authority of Chagnoald, bishop of Laon, who became the personal assistant to the saint and one of his disciples.¹⁹⁰ He told me that he often saw Columbanus, when he was taking a walk in the wilderness and was devoting himself to fasting and prayer, how he would frequently summon wild animals, beasts, and birds which would come immediately at his command, and he would pet them gently. The savage animals and birds, rejoicing and playing with great delight, would then jump about, just as puppies fawn upon their masters. And the aforementioned man [Chagnoald] said he had often seen the little animal, which people commonly name a squirrel, called down from the tops of high trees, taken in his hand and put on his neck where he let it crawl in and out of his habit.

to Jonas: *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 2 states that every Saturday senior nuns should visit all the beds of the sisters to check whether anything has been hidden or retained without permission.

¹⁸⁹ Genesis 8:6–7.

¹⁹⁰ We have followed de Vogüé in amending Krusch's edition and placing this section here, where it is to be found in the Metz manuscript, rather than at the end of chapter 17, where it is out of context, although at that point the reading adopted by Krusch does have an additional sentence which makes explicit the theme of nature: 'And so did the beasts and the birds obey the power of the man of God'. On reasons for this, see de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 88. Chagnoald was the son of Chagneric and the brother of Burgundofara. He was a monk of Luxeuil, and served as Columbanus's personal assistant: he later became bishop of Laon in northern Gaul. He is mentioned in *VC* I: 27, 28; II: 7, and was one of Jonas's eyewitness sources. He does not appear in Burgundofara's will, which may suggest that he was already dead by 633/34, which would have implications for Jonas's movements, since Chagnoald was one of his informants, as noted here, and appears in *VC* I: 27, 28; *VC* II, 7, 8: Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, p. 198. On Chagnoald as a member of the Faronid clan, see Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 65–69.

[I 16] The beer that overflowed without loss of the outpouring liquid

Subsequently another miracle was performed.¹⁹¹ When the mealtime came the steward of the refectory was getting ready to serve the beer.¹⁹² This is a drink fermented from the juice of grain or barley that is drunk by all the peoples in the world who live close to Ocean, in addition to the *Scordisci* and the Dardanians.¹⁹³ It is drunk in Gaul, Britain, Ireland, *Germania*, and in other places where the people have not dissimilar customs.¹⁹⁴ The steward takes a vessel, which is called a *tiprum*,¹⁹⁵ to the cellar and places it before the vat in which the beer was kept. He unplugs the spigot and allows the beer to flow into the *tiprum*. Then suddenly one of the brothers came to tell him that the father had summoned him. The steward, burning with the fire of obedience, forgets to put the spigot back and rushes to the blessed man, holding in his hand the plug that they call a *duciculum*.¹⁹⁶ After the man of God had given him the orders he had wanted, the steward, having remembered his negligence, quickly went back to the cellar, guessing that nothing would be left in the vat from which the beer was running. But he saw that the beer had risen over

191 Following ML's suggestion, we have followed the reading of the Metz manuscript. Krusch includes the additional phrase 'which was wrought through the blessed Columbanus by his cellarer'. Even though this may not be by Jonas, its emphasis on the saint as a channel of divine power is in accordance with his general approach.

192 Beer was drunk in Columbanus's communities. Barley beer (*cervesia*) and wheat beer (*camum*) were brewed during this period. Jonas distinguishes here barley beer (*cervisa*). Beer is mentioned in Columbanus's *Communal Rule* III (*SCO*, pp. 146–47), which prescribes a penalty for anyone who spills beer. On the importance of beer in Columbanus's communities, see Nelson, *The Barbarian's Beverage: A History of Beer in Ancient Europe*, pp. 94–96.

193 The *Scordisci* were a Gallic Iron Age tribe centred in the territory of present-day Serbia at the confluence of the Sava, Drava, and Danube rivers. Their territories were incorporated into the Roman provinces of Pannonia, Moesia, and Dacia. The *Dardani* were a tribe that occupied the territory of *Dardania* in the Balkans which was conquered by the Romans during the reign of Augustus. It became a separate Roman province under Diocletian. The *Scordisci* and *Dardani*, although not neighbours of 'Ocean' like the other groups mentioned, were known to have been beer drinkers (Nelson, *The Barbarian's Beverage*, p. 95).

194 Jonas is probably drawing on a now-lost classical ethnographic source. His note on beer also indicates that he was writing from the perspective of those whose habitual drink was wine.

195 This is obviously some kind of pitcher although the word is unknown from other sources. This is the first historical evidence for the storage of beer in a barrel, according to Nelson, *The Barbarian's Beverage*, p. 94.

196 The word has passed into French as 'douzil' ('peg'); cf. *bullugas* (blueberries) in *VC* I: 9.

the top of the *tiprum* but not the least drop had fallen outside, so that you would have believed that the *tiprum* had doubled in size, and that the vat had increased in height, the two having the same circumference.¹⁹⁷ How great was the merit of the man who gave orders, and how great the obedience of him who complied! In such a way did the Lord wish to avert the sadness of both, because, if the zeal of the man giving commands or of him obeying them had diminished the supplies of the brothers, both of them would have gone without their rations.¹⁹⁸ Thus the Just Judge¹⁹⁹ intervened to erase the faults of both because, if the accident had occurred and the Lord had permitted it, each of them would have taken the blame for what had happened.²⁰⁰

[I 17] The food forbidden to a bear, an increase in the supply of grain in the barn, and the multiplication of bread. The death of the monk Columba delayed by the prayer of the man of God

It happened around this time that the man of God, a lover of solitude, was walking through a thick wood of viburnum trees that stood beside the field *Fredemungiacas*²⁰¹ when he comes across a stag's carcass which had been killed by the savagery of wolves. A bear had already eaten a small bit of the meat and, licking its blood, was ready to devour the rest of the carcass. The man of God confronted the bear and ordered it not to damage the hide, which was needed for shoes. At this, the beast, forgetful of its ferocity, becomes gentle and, contrary to its nature and without growling, lowers its head fawningly and backs away from the carcass.²⁰² The man of God,

197 Literally, 'having the same circumference as the inside of the lip of the vessel': Jonas's meaning is clear, although the expression is difficult to replicate. The circumference of the vessel for the beer and the vat matched each other so that no beer was lost from either.

198 There were strict penalties for spilling beer or dropping food, ranging from prostrating oneself in church for the duration of twelve Psalms to going without one's portion of beer for a specific time, depending on how much was spilt: Columbanus, *Communal Rule* III (*SCO*, pp. 146–47).

199 *Aequus arbiter* and *iustus arbiter* occur frequently in the *VC*.

200 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* II: 7 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 69), where Benedict attributes the miracles to his disciple Maurus, and vice versa, illustrating their mutual humility.

201 Unidentified placename.

202 The obedience of the bear is found in *VC* I: 8, 27, and in Jonas's *VV* 6. The bear's attitude and deference to the saint recalls that of the episode in Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* III: 15 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 136), where a bear serves the monk Florentius.

returning to the brothers, told them this and ordered them to go to the place and strip the hide from the stag's carcass. So the brothers set off and came across a great flock of birds of prey hovering in the distance, but which do not dare approach the carcass on account of the man of God's prohibition. They wait for a long time from a distance to see whether any beast or bird would audaciously attempt to plunder the forbidden food. They see them approach, attracted by the smell of the carcass, then stop at a distance and, as if to avoid something deadly and lethal, turn away and quickly flee.

Another time when Columba was staying at Luxeuil, Winioc, the priest whom we mentioned before, came to visit him and he followed Columba wherever he went. They came to the storehouse in which the grain was kept. Winioc looks, and noting how little there was, says that he does not have enough bread to feed such a multitude,²⁰³ and loudly asks the reason for the negligence in not gathering enough grain. Blessed Columba replies: 'If people would only serve their Creator as they should, they would never in all ages know hunger, as indeed the voice of the prophetic Psalmist celebrates: "I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread."²⁰⁴ He who satisfied the hunger of five thousand with five loaves of bread can very easily fill the storehouse with grain.'²⁰⁵ While Winioc stayed at the monastery that night, the storehouse was filled with grain through the faith and prayer of the man of God.²⁰⁶ In the morning Winioc rises and while passing the storehouse he sees, to his surprise, the storehouse open and the custodian standing before the door. He asked the custodian who had done this or how many cart loads had brought such an amount of grain. The custodian of the grainstore tells him: 'It's not as you think, for look, can you see any sign of cart tracks or the imprint of hooves on the ground? And these keys never left my possession during the night and so, while the door was bolted, the storehouse was filled with grain by divine aid.' Winioc began to look carefully at the ground and to see if he could find, by diligent examination, any traces that pack-animals had been there. When he had found nothing resembling such traces, he says: 'The Lord is able to prepare a meal for His servants in the wilderness.'²⁰⁷

203 Presumably referring to the monastic communities here, although the grain may also have been distributed to the local population in times of scarcity. Cf. Jonas *VJ* 13.

204 Psalms 36:25.

205 Allusion to Matthew 14:17–21; 16:9.

206 Storehouse of grain filled through prayer: see Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* I: 9 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 40). A similar miracle occurs in the fifth-century *Vita Eutropii* 13.

207 Psalms 77:19, also cited by Jonas in *VC* I: 7.

A while after that, the same²⁰⁸ Columba came to Fontaine and found sixty brothers hoeing the ground and preparing the soil, which had been turned over in clods of earth, for sowing. When he sees them cut the sods with great labour, he said: 'Take the refreshment that the Lord has provided for you, my brothers.' When Columba's assistant heard this, he says: 'My father, we don't have more than two loaves of bread and a little beer.' 'Go', he replies, 'and bring them here.' The assistant hurried away and returned with the bread and the small amount of beer. Looking up to Heaven, Columba says: 'Jesus Christ, only hope of the world, who, from five loaves of bread nourished five thousand in the wilderness, multiply these loaves and this drink.' Wonderful faith! All ate their fill and everyone had as much to drink as he wanted. The assistant gathered up twice as much in leftovers²⁰⁹ and he doubled the amount of drink. And so he realized that faith is more deserving to merit the reward of divine gifts, than despair, which is wont to diminish even what has been given.

When one time the man of God was staying at the same monastery of Luxeuil, one of the brothers, who was also called Columbanus, came down with fever. He was *in extremis* and he begged for a merciful release.²¹⁰ As he knew he was dying, he began to pray. Wishing that he had already taken his last breath, confident of the eternal reward which he had sought for in his many years of service, he saw a man veiled in golden light²¹¹ come towards him and say to him: 'I am not able to lead you from your body at the moment, because I am impeded by the prayers and tears of your father Columbanus.' When Columbanus [the sick man] heard this, sorrowfully, as if he had awakened from sleep, he began to call out for his carer, Theudegisilus, whom we mentioned above.²¹² 'Hurry', he says, 'and make our common father Columbanus come to me.' Theudegisilus goes quickly and finds blessed Columbanus in the church weeping. He asks him to hasten to the sick man. He rushes to him and asked him what he wanted. The man tells him the reason: 'Why', he says, 'do you detain me by your prayers in this wretched life? For there are those who are present who wish to lead me away if they were not hindered by your tears and prayers. Release the obstacles holding me back so that the celestial kingdom may lie

208 The 'isidem' ('the same') is significant, because there are two Columbas in the chapter.

209 Cf. Matthew 14:20; 15:37.

210 The phrase *felicem exitum* ('merciful release') appears often in Book Two, for example, in *VC* II: 12, 13, 21, 25. See de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 30 n. 65.

211 See also *VC* II: 11, 23, 25.

212 See *VC* I: 15.

open to me.' Then Columba, terrified, having struck the bell,²¹³ ordered all to be present. He moderated joy against the loss of his holy companion. He administers the Body of Christ as the viaticum from this life to the dying man, and after the final kiss of Peace²¹⁴ he began to chant the Requiem. For the dying man was of the same kin-group as blessed Columbanus. They had left Ireland together and bore the same name.²¹⁵

[I 18] The respect shown by King Theuderic, the reprimands of Columbanus, and the hostility of Brunhild

The renown of the holy man had by this time spread throughout all the provinces of Gaul and *Germania*.²¹⁶ He was held in high esteem in the opinion of all, and venerable in the devotion of all, to the extent that King Theuderic,²¹⁷ who was reigning at that time, used often to come and see him and with all humility would request the help of his prayers. For Sigibert, whom we mentioned above,²¹⁸ had been assassinated at the royal villa²¹⁹ at Vitry, which is in the environs of the city of Arras,²²⁰ through

213 As GC notes, Jonas uses the phrase *signo tacto* in *VJ* 14, 16 to mean the striking of a beam ('semantron') or bell, which would seem to be the meaning here as well.

214 This is noted also in *VC* II: 25 as taking place between the last rites and the singing of the Psalms.

215 Columbanus in his letter to the Gallic bishops mentions that during the first twelve years in Gaul seventeen members of his community died (*Ep.* II: 6; *SCO*, pp. 16–17). The statement that they had the same name, which is missing in the Metz manuscript, and came from the same kin group in Ireland, suggests that the name Colmán (the Irish for Columba) was associated with this kin group, and that it was Columbanus's name from birth (i.e. it was not an adopted religious name). In the late sixth century, there is a Colmán Mar who was king of the Uí Dunlainge in Leinster (around Naas), the province from which Columbanus came (cf. *VC* I: 2). However, he is more plausibly linked to the Uí Bairrche, another Leinster dynasty, which had strong connections with Bangor where Columbanus became a monk (see Ó Cróinín, 'Ireland, 400–800', p. 194).

216 Jonas here uses classical vocabulary to describe the Frankish kingdom, which incorporated the old provinces of *Gallia* and *Germania*, corresponding roughly to most of modern France, Belgium, and the territory west of the Rhine.

217 Theuderic II, king of Burgundy from 596 to 613, was the son of Childebert II and grandson of Sigibert I and Brunhild. He was born in 587 so he would still have been a boy at the time of his initial dealings with Columbanus. He would have been about eight years old when he became king and about twenty-three when he banished the saint in 610.

218 See *VC* I: 6.

219 The Latin has *villa publica*, which is a standard phrase for a royal residence.

220 See Gregory of Tours, *DLH* IV: 51 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 247–48). Historically, Sigibert and his assassination are irrelevant to Columbanus's life, since it occurred in 575,

the guile of his brother, Chilperic,²²¹ who was then in the town of Tournai, and whom Sigibert had been pursuing with the intention of killing him. Following this event, his son, Childebert, was made king backed by his mother, Brunhild.²²² But Childebert died in his youth,²²³ and his two sons, Theudebert and Theuderic, ruled with their grandmother, Brunhild. Theuderic received the kingdom of Burgundy, while Theudebert undertook the rule of the kingdom of Austrasia.²²⁴ Thus, Theuderic was pleased that he had the blessed Columbanus in his kingdom. As the king used often to come and see the saint, the man of God began to criticize him for his adulterous relations with his concubines: why did he not satisfy himself with the comforts of a lawful wife in order that royal offspring should be born to an honourable queen, instead of being seen to emerge from whore-houses?²²⁵ When, however, the king agreed to comply with the man of God's command and said that he would put an end to all his irregular relationships, the ancient serpent entered the mind of his grandmother, Brunhild – a second Jezebel²²⁶ – and aroused her by the sting of pride against the man of God, for she could see that Theuderic was obeying the man of God. She dreaded that her own authority and standing would

approximately fifteen years before the saint's arrival in Francia. In *VC* I: 6 Jonas has wrongly presented Sigibert, rather than his son Childebert II, or Guntram, as the king with whom Columbanus dealt initially. The error is probably deliberate. See the discussion in the introduction, section 4.

221 Gregory attributed the assassination to Chilperic's wife Fredegund.

222 Brunhild was the dowager queen of Sigibert I, whom she had married in 567. She was a Visigothic princess, the daughter of the Visigothic king Athanagild and Queen Goiswintha. Her son Childebert was raised to the kingship at Christmas 575. See Gregory of Tours, *DLH* V: 1 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 254–55).

223 Childebert must have been twenty-one at the time of his death in 596: technically he was still an *adolescens*, that is between the ages of fifteen and thirty: Jonas's description of him as being *intra adulescentiae annos* ('in his adolescent years') is thus technically correct.

224 The eastern Merovingian kingdom, where, according to Fredegar IV: 16 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 11), Theudebert was established, with his capital at Metz, in 596.

225 The sons of Theuderic were Sigibert, Childebert and Corbus, and Merovech, all of whom were born to concubines. See Fredegar IV: 21, 24, 29 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 14, 16, 20).

226 Allusion to 1 Kings 16–21; 2 Kings 9:30–37. Jezebel was a Phoenician princess who married Ahab, king of northern Israel. She turned Ahab from the worship of the Jewish God to that of the Phoenician god Baal. She had many Jewish prophets killed and also came into conflict with the prophet Elijah, who anointed one of his servants, Jehu, to overthrow the house of Ahab. On Brunhild as a second Jezebel, see Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History'.

be destroyed if the king got rid of his concubines and a queen ruled at court.²²⁷

[I 19] The visit of Columbanus to Brunhild and Theuderic, and the scattering²²⁸ of the food and drink, royal displeasure, expulsion from Luxeuil, and the freeing of the condemned

It happened, therefore, that one day Columbanus went to Brunhild. At that time she was staying at the villa of *Brocariacum*.²²⁹ When she saw him come into the court, she led the sons of Theuderic, whom he had fathered from his adulterous relationships, to the man of God.²³⁰ When Columbanus saw them, he asks them what they want from him. Brunhild answers, 'These are the sons of the king: strengthen them with your blessing.' But Columbanus replies, 'You should know that these boys will never become kings, because they have come out of whore-houses.'²³¹ Brunhild, raging at

227 Fredegar IV: 30 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 20) notes that in 607 Theuderic took as wife the Visigothic princess Ermenberga, the daughter of King Witteric, but after a year sent her back to Spain without her dowry and without consummating the marriage. According to Fredegar this was due to Brunhild and Theuderic's sister, Theudila, who turned the king against his new bride. Jonas's impression seems to have been justified as Brunhild had also interfered in the marriage arrangements of her son Childebert II. Underlying these conflicts there would seem to be a constitutional issue: the functions of the queen, which were considerable, especially in terms of patronage, were only to be exercised by one individual. Hence, Brunhild's desire to exclude any potential rivals.

228 *Effusio* here might either mean the lavish provision of the food by Theuderic, or Columbanus's violent rejection of it. More probably the latter is intended.

229 This royal villa has not been identified for certain. It has been commonly identified as Bruyères-le-Châtel (dép. Seine-et-Oise), but this seems unlikely as it is over 300 km from Luxeuil. A more likely candidate is Boucheresse, between Autun and Chalon-sur-Saône, which were royal centres of the kingdom of Burgundy. For possible locations for the villa, see de Vogüé, 'En lisant Jonas', pp. 78–79; Roussel, *Saint Colomban* 1, pp. 154–55 n. 7.

230 The birth of sons (named Sigibert and Childebert) to Theuderic in 602 and 603 is recorded by Fredegar IV: 21, 24 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 14, 16), when the king himself would have been fifteen or sixteen.

231 The issue of illegitimacy in the Merovingian family is complex. Gregory of Tours notes that, irrespective of their mother's social standing, all children born to a king counted as the king's sons. He relates how bishop Sagittarius of Gap voiced his opinion that the sons of King Guntram could never succeed to the throne because their mother had been a servant (for which the bishop was imprisoned in a monastery) *DLH* V: 20 (trans. Thorpe, p. 286). It is, however, not clear how this statement would be understood: certainly, there were royal bastards who were not accepted as throne-worthy, and who were not acknowledged by their fathers: see Wood, 'Deconstructing the Merovingian family'. Irish kings also practised polygamy at this time so Columbanus was not voicing a different cultural perspective.

this, orders the children to leave. As the man of God was leaving the royal court and was crossing the threshold, a great quake occurred and shook the whole building, striking everyone with fear.²³² It did not, however, abate the fury of the wretched woman. From this moment Brunhild began to set up traps. She sends messengers to the neighbouring monastery,²³³ and orders that no monk should travel beyond the monastic precincts, and that no one give shelter or aid to any of the monks of Columbanus. Blessed Columbanus, seeing that he has stirred the royal minds against himself, hastens to them in order to dissuade them from their miserable defiant intent. He was at that time near the royal villa of Époisses.²³⁴ When Columbanus arrived there at sunset, they tell the king that the man of God is there but that he does not wish to enter the king's dwellings.²³⁵ Then Theuderic says, 'It is better to show respect to the man of God by providing him with appropriate hospitality, than to provoke God to anger by insulting one of His servants.' He therefore orders that food befitting a king be prepared and taken to the servant of God.

Then they [the servants] came and offered Columbanus the hospitality according to the king's command. When Columbanus saw the food and drink produced in such royal style, he asked them what they wanted from him. They tell him, 'They have been sent to you by the king.' This was detestable to him and he says: 'It is written: "The Most High approveth not the gifts of the wicked."²³⁶ For it is not right that the mouths of the servants of God be polluted by the food of one who denies to the servants of God not only access to their own homes, but also to the homes of others.' With these words, all the containers were shattered to pieces.²³⁷ The wine and cider

Refusing to bless the children was a deliberately hostile act by Columbanus that publicly insulted his benefactors.

232 De Jong has seen this encounter as one of conflict between the monastic sphere and the royal court: 'Monastic Prisoners or Opting Out? Political Coercion and Honour in the Frankish Kingdoms'.

233 An indication that the villa of *Brocariacum*, which has not been identified for certain, was located in the same region as Luxeuil.

234 Époisses (*Spissiacum*), now better known for its pungent cheese, is located 12 km west of Semur in the Côte d'Or of Burgundy and is only about 70 km from Autun, so within two days' walking distance from the villa of *Brocariacum* south of Autun.

235 The refusal of hospitality was an established way of indicating criticism: see Fredegar IV: 78 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 66).

236 Ecclesiasticus 34:23. Athala likewise refuses an impious gift in *VC* II: 24.

237 Reading *frusta* instead of *frustra*. *In frustra* could be construed as meaning 'in vain', but 'in pieces' seems to be the required sense.

flowed out onto the ground and everything else was scattered here and there. The terrified servants tell the king what had happened. Theuderic, struck with fear, hastens together with his grandmother to the man of God at first light.²³⁸ Both implore forgiveness for their offence and promise to amend themselves in the future. Columbanus was satisfied with these promises and returned to his monastery.

But the proffered oaths for the promises made are soon broken, while the increased miseries [of the community] continue unabated, and as usual adulterous affairs are pursued by the king. Hearing this, blessed Columbanus sent Theuderic a letter full of chastisement, and threatened him with excommunication if he would not immediately change his ways.²³⁹ This again antagonized Brunhild who incites the mind of the king against Columbanus, and does everything she could to trouble him. She urges the nobles, courtiers, all the leading men, to stir the mind of the king against the man of God. She also set about soliciting the bishops to cast doubt on Columbanus's religious way of life and to slander the validity of his Rule, which he had introduced for his monks to follow.²⁴⁰ Then those at court, yielding to the insinuations of the wretched queen,²⁴¹ stir up the mind of the king against the man of God, and compelled him to visit Columbanus so that he might examine his religious way of life. Therefore the king, under compulsion, came to the man of God at Luxeuil. He confronted Columbanus about why he did not comply with the customs of the region, and did not allow all Christians access to the inner confines of the monastery.²⁴²

238 This does not suggest a great deal of haste: Theuderic and Brunhild wait until the next day before approaching the saint.

239 The Latin *litteras* can be used to denote a single epistle, which is what seems to be implied here. The letter has not survived, but, given the nature of Columbanus's letters that do, we can imagine that it was forthright.

240 This would appear to be a reference to the charges raised at a council held at Chalon-sur-Saône in c.603–04, to which we have Columbanus's response in *Ep. II* (*SCO*, pp. 12–23). Jonas has apparently conflated this with events closer to 610. Perhaps significantly, Jonas only lists here the attack on Columbanus's monasticism, not on his dating of Easter (which by Jonas's day was held to be heretical); he thus makes Columbanus seem more orthodox than he was, and makes Theuderic and Brunhild more unreasonable. In fact, there is no evidence that the king or his grandmother backed the bishops at Chalon. See Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions*, p. 40.

241 As ML notes, we have emended Krusch's *obtemperantis auligae* to read *obtemperantes aulici*.

242 Jonas's account here is problematic. If the region is to be taken as Francia, some monastic traditions did deny outsiders access within the community walls: this is especially true of female houses following the *Rule of Caesarius* (*Rule for Nuns*, 36–37). See Diem,

Blessed Columbanus, who was courageous and strong in mind, replies in this way to the king's criticisms: it is not his custom to allow the laity, strangers to the religious way of life, access to the living quarters of the servants of God. Appropriate and suitable places have been prepared by him specifically for this purpose, which can accommodate all the guests who arrived.²⁴³ The king replies to this, 'If you wish to have the gifts of our generosity and the support of our assistance, everyone must be allowed free access everywhere.'²⁴⁴ 'If you try to violate what has up till now been strictly forbidden under the discipline of our Rule',²⁴⁵ Columbanus replies, I no longer want to be sustained by any of your gifts or support, and if you

Das monastische Experiment, esp. pp. 187, 255–56, 262–63, 314–16, 319, 333, and more recently Dailey, 'Confinement and Exclusion in the Monasteries of Sixth-Century Gaul'. The words put into Theuderic's mouth do not, therefore, entirely reflect the state of Frankish monasticism in the early seventh century – although it is possible that strict enclosure was largely limited to female houses before the arrival of Columbanus. One should, however, note that Caesarius's legislation influenced Columbanian tradition, above all in the *Rule of Donatus* (Diem, *Das monastische Experiment*, pp. 255–56).

243 We know little of the physical organisation of Frankish monasteries in the sixth and seventh centuries (but see James, 'Archaeology and the Merovingian Monastery', and Bowes, 'Inventing Ascetic Space: Houses, Monasteries and the "Archaeology of Monasticism"'). Literary sources, however, suggest that Irish monasteries at this time were organized into different zones of increasing sacredness the nearer one approached the church and monastic graveyard. There was a sharp hierarchical demarcation of space modelled on the Old Testament Temple in Jerusalem which had been divided into three more progressively sacred zones. Access to the inner precinct of the monastery, the *septa secretiora* (translated above as 'inner confines of the monastery'), was strictly forbidden to the laity. Jonas's reference here to the *septa secretiora* ('inner enclosure', or area out-of-bounds to the laity) was surely intended to suggest that the monastic space at Luxeuil was organized into clearly demarcated areas which have parallels with contemporary Irish monasteries. On this 'scriptural canon of planning', which influenced insular concepts of monastic space, see Jenkins, *Holy, Holier, Holiest*; MacDonald, 'Aspects of the Monastic Landscape in Adomnán's *Life of Columba*'. The enclosure was primarily symbolic and could simply consist of a hedge, as was the case at Eligius's foundation at Solignac. Sébastien Bully's excavations at Luxeuil, however, scarcely allow such an enclosure to be of any great scale. Moreover, later in the chapter, Jonas states that the king had merely entered the refectory, which might suggest that the *septa secretiora* at Luxeuil consisted of a number of buildings that were reserved for the monks. What Bully's excavations do suggest is that the presence of guests was considerable.

244 This raises the crucial issue of patronage. Luxeuil was a Merovingian foundation: Wood, 'Jonas, the Merovingians, and Pope Honorius', pp. 106–09. There would seem to have been conflict between the rights of the founder as opposed to those of the abbot.

245 There is no mention in the surviving Rules ascribed to Columbanus (as opposed to Caesarius's *Rule for Nuns*) that specifically forbade laity access to the inner precincts of the monastery, although it is clear that there were monastic boundaries. See Columbanus, *Communal Rule VIII, Penitential B 26* (SCO, pp. 154–55, 178–79).

have come here for this reason, so that you might destroy the communities of the servants of God and dishonour the regular discipline, your kingdom will soon be completely destroyed and all the royal offspring annihilated.' Later events proved the truth of this prophecy.²⁴⁶

The king had already rashly entered the refectory, but terrified at hearing these words he quickly came back outside. The man of God then follows the king rebuking him harshly. Theuderic replies, 'You hope that I will make a martyr out of you, but I am not so crazy as to commit such a crime.'²⁴⁷ Rather, he would be prepared to undertake useful activities consonant with better advice,²⁴⁸ that he who dissents from all secular custom should prepare to return the way by which he came. At the same time the courtiers unanimously assent: they do not want to have a man there who would not associate with everyone. At this blessed Columbanus says that, unless he is dragged away by force, he will never leave the enclosure of the monastery.

The king then withdrew and left behind a certain nobleman called Baudulf. This man remained there, and drives the man of God from the monastery and leads him into exile to the town of Besançon until royal judgement decreed what should be done with him. While he is there, Columbanus hears that the prison is full of condemned men awaiting the death penalty. The man of God hastens to the prison and, having entered the gate without any opposition, he preaches the word of God to the condemned. The prisoners promise him that if they were freed they would amend their lives and do penance for the crimes they have committed. After this, blessed Columbanus orders his assistant, Domoalis, whom we mentioned above,²⁴⁹ to seize and pull the iron chain which bound together

246 The branch of the Merovingian family to which Theuderic belonged was annihilated after his death in 613, when Chlothar II, ruler of the north-western kingdom of Neustria, united all the Merovingian kingdoms. Jonas attributed Chlothar's victory to the support he had given Columbanus during his exile.

247 We have followed Tosi's punctuation on the advice of ML: Krusch preferred readings in which Theuderic's direct speech ends before the phrase 'but he is not so crazy to commit such a crime'. Here there is perhaps an allusion to Theuderic and Brunhild's supposed involvement in the martyrdom of Desiderius of Vienne, noted by Jonas in *VC* I: 27. On the cult of bishop Desiderius and its interest for the Columbanian communities, see Fox, 'The Bishop and the Monk: Desiderius of Vienne and the Columbanian Movement'. Columbanus himself may have hoped for martyrdom: the idea often recurs in his sermons.

248 Jonas presumably has in mind the notion of *utilis/utilitas* to be found in Merovingian political discourse: Theuderic intends to act in a manner that he thinks good for the kingdom.

249 See *VC* I: 9.

the feet of the prisoners. The chain shatters into pieces, when he seizes and tugs it, as if it had been rotten wood. Columbanus orders the condemned men, now that their feet have been freed, to leave the prison.²⁵⁰ Then completing the ritual action set out in the Gospel, he washes their feet and dried them with a linen cloth.²⁵¹ He then tells them to head for the church, to cleanse themselves of the crimes they had committed, through repentance and by washing them away with tears. The prisoners hasten to the church but find the doors locked. When, however, the military tribune²⁵² saw that the power of God, working through blessed Columbanus, had shattered the fetters of the prisoners and had left nothing to him but an empty prison, as if roused from sleep, he set out to follow the tracks of the condemned with his soldiers. The fugitives, seeing the soldiers coming up behind them and perceiving that the outer doors of the church are bolted, trapped between these two dangers, shout to the man of God to save them. Columbanus, with strained breath, raises his head and implores the Lord that He might not permit those whom He has released from iron fetters by His strength to be again delivered into the hands of the prison guards.²⁵³ Without delay, the goodness of the Creator opens the doors, which had been securely fastened, and opens a way of escape for those in peril, and they quickly entered the church. After the condemned have entered, the doors close behind them of their own accord in the sight of the soldiers, as if the guardian had quickly unlocked and then locked the doors with a key.²⁵⁴ Thus, blessed Columbanus, arriving with his companions at the same time as the tribune with his soldiers, found the doors shut. They go to find the guardian, Aspasius, to get the keys. When he came and tried to unlock the doors, he

250 The freeing of prisoners, which is a recurrent topos in Merovingian hagiography, was often seen as the prerogative of bishops (cf. Gregory of Tours, *LVP* VII: 3 (trans. James, pp. 62–63)). On this, see Graus, ‘Die Gewalt bei den Anfängen des Feudalismus und die “Gefangenenerbefreiungen” der merowingischen Hagiographie’.

251 John 13:4–5 and (a closer parallel to the situation) Acts 16:33.

252 The term reflects Jonas’s use of classical and New Testament language: a *tribunus militum* was an officer of the Roman army ranked below the legate and above that of a centurion. The term continues throughout the post-Classical period, appearing, for instance, in Eutropius, Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini*, Orosius, Justinian’s *Digest*, and Paul the Deacon’s *Romana*. It is, however, curious that Jonas does not use the phrase *custos carceris*, which appears in the related passage of Acts 16:27.

253 Cf. the cry of Paul, Acts 16:28.

254 Churches were places of sanctuary where fugitives often sought refuge. See Gregory of Tours, *DLH* X: 6 (trans. Thorpe, p. 553) and his *Miracles of Saint Martin* II: 35; IV: 39 (trans. Van Dam, pp. 246–47, 300–01) for similar instances.

says he had never found the bolts so well locked. After that no one dared to cause harm to the condemned men whom the divine power had set free.

[I 20] The return of Columbanus to Luxeuil and the blindness of the guards. His expulsion by royal command, separation from companions, and the healing of his oppressors

So after this the man of God, seeing that no guards were keeping an eye on him and that no one caused him trouble – for they all saw that the power of God was aflame in him, and dissociated themselves from the wrongs done to him, lest they become accomplices in his persecution – one Sunday climbs to the top of the steep summit of the mountain there. The city is so situated that the houses are clustered together on the spreading slopes of the precipitous mountain: the rocky tops break out into high peaks, which are cut off on all sides by the protective bed of the river Doubs that prevents all access to travellers.²⁵⁵ Columbanus waits until midday to see if anyone would prevent him from returning to the monastery. And when no one appeared, with his companions he walks right through the centre of the city and returns to the monastery. When Brunhild and Theuderic heard that Columbanus had returned from his exile, they are struck by yet worse sensations of anger. They order a cohort of soldiers once again to take the man of God by force and to return him to exile. So the soldiers arrive with their tribune and search the monastic confines looking for the man of God. He was in fact sitting in the atrium of the church reading a book. The soldiers entered the place many times and passed so close to him that some kicked his feet and others brushed against his clothes, but they did not see him because their eyes were blinded. It was a most beautiful sight. Columbanus, rejoicing, saw them searching for him while he remained invisible. While they could be seen, they could not see him who was sitting in the midst of them.²⁵⁶ Then the tribune came and looking

255 The accurate description of Besançon is an example of Jonas's attention to topographical detail: cf. Julius Caesar's description: *Gallic Wars* I: 38.

256 When Frankish soldiers tried to steal from the monastery of Fondi in Campania they kept stumbling over Libertinus who was lying prostrate in prayer on the floor of the chapel and whom they could not see. Gregory *Dialogues* I: 2 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 10). Cf. 2 Kings 6:18: 'And the enemies came down to him, but Eliseus prayed to the Lord, saying: "Strike, I beseech thee, this people with blindness. And the Lord struck them with blindness, according to the word of Eliseus.' This episode also has parallels with *Dialogues* II: 31 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 99) where a Goth, determined to claim the money left by a poor farmer in Monte Cassino for safekeeping, finds Benedict reading in front of the entrance of

through the window saw the man of God sitting happily among his soldiers and reading. Recognizing the power of God, he says, 'Why do you search the atrium of the church so thoroughly, but find no one? Do not let your heart be at all misled any more by this insane error; for you will not be able to find him whom the divine power conceals. Let's give up this task and return to tell the king we have not been able to find him.' It is evident from this that the tribune had not come to do harm to the man of God and for this reason had deserved to see him.²⁵⁷

When they reported this to Theuderic and Brunhild²⁵⁸ they were even more incensed to carry out their wretched plan. They sent Count Bertechar with a detachment of men, along with Baudulf, who had been there before, to search more thoroughly for him.²⁵⁹ When they arrived they found blessed Columbanus in the church singing Psalms and praying with the whole community of monks. They speak to the man of God thus: 'Man of God, we beg you to obey the king's orders and our own.'²⁶⁰ Leave, and retrace the route by which you first came here.' But Columbanus answers: 'I do not think it is pleasing to the Creator that I return once again to my native land which I left out of fear of Christ.'²⁶¹ When Bertechar realized that the man of God would by no means listen to him, he departed but left behind men whose minds were fiercer. But, in fact, the men who remained urge the man of God to take pity on them who had had the misfortune of being left behind to carry out such a task and to consider the danger they faced. If they did not forcefully evict him, they themselves would be in danger of death. But Columbanus says that he had often asserted that he would not leave unless he was dragged away by force. The men, caught between

the monastery. Compare also Gregory of Tours, *DLH* VI: 6 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 333–37) on Hospitius of Nice.

257 The good tribune as in 2 Kings 1:13–14. Jonas models Columbanus on the prophet Elisha here.

258 Jonas talks of the 'royal ears', and in the ensuing sentence he sometimes uses a singular and sometimes a plural verb: we have ignored the inconsistencies.

259 Baudulf was the noble mentioned in *VC* I: 19 who first expelled Columbanus from Luxeuil and took him to Besançon. Bertechar or Berthar was Theuderic's chamberlain. Following the battle of Zülpich in 612 he was sent to capture Theuderic's half-brother, Theudebert, who was stripped of his royal clothing at Cologne. Theuderic gave Bertechar Theudebert's horse and its trappings. See Fredegar IV: 38 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 32).

260 Jonas is imitating 2 Kings 1:9.

261 Ascetic exile outside one's country (*potior peregrinatio*) was understood by the Irish as a ritual vow. Returning would have meant breaking this sacred commitment. See Charles-Edwards, 'The Social Background to Irish *peregrinatio*'. See *VC* I: 3, above, with notes *ad loc*.

two different fears, with terror urging them on from every side, grab the stole he was wearing. Some threw themselves on their knees and tearfully beg him to absolve them of blame for this criminal offence: they were only following the king's orders.²⁶²

The man of God, seeing how he would endanger others if he were to satisfy his own strict standards, departs amid the sorrow and grief of all. Guards were appointed, who were not to leave his side until they had driven him from the kingdom and its jurisdiction.²⁶³ Their leader was Ragumund who was to lead him as far as Nantes.²⁶⁴ All the brothers followed as if it were a funeral, for grief filled the hearts of all.²⁶⁵ Troubled at the loss of so many members of his community the father raised his eyes to heaven and says, 'Oh Eternal Creator of the world, prepare a fitting place for us where your people may serve You forever.' Then he consoles the whole group at once, telling them not to give up hope, but to give great praise to almighty God. He did not regard this as a setback for himself or for his followers, but rather as an opportunity to increase the communities of monks. Whoever wants to follow him should do so entirely prepared to bear the injustices with him. Whoever preferred to stay behind at Luxeuil should remain there safe: the Lord would soon avenge their affliction. But as all are unanimous that they do not want to be separated from the guardianship of their shepherd, the king's guards declare that none would be allowed to follow him from there, except those who were his countrymen²⁶⁶ or who had come to him from the region of the Britons.²⁶⁷ The others, who

262 Again, Jonas models this scene on the arrest of the Prophet Elisha in 2 Kings 1:13–14.

263 This would have been specifically the territory of Theuderic, and not that of his brother Theudebert II nor of their cousin Chlothar II.

264 Luxeuil to Nantes is a considerable journey of some 663 km. The choice of the Loire port, apart from it being the place of Columbanus's arrival, was no doubt linked to the fact that it was attached to the Burgundian kingdom of Theuderic. See the discussion in the introduction, section 4.

265 The evidence of Columbanus's letter written from Nantes (*Ep.* IV; *SCO*, pp. 26–37) indicates that not all of the brothers were so sorry to see the troublesome abbot depart. The letter reveals the tensions latent within Columbanus's community. Jonas is giving a whitewashed version of events here.

266 Literally 'who had been given by the country of his birth'.

267 *arva Britannica*: the feminine form of the noun, *arva*, as used by Jonas, is attested in medieval Latin: s.v. *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch*. Jonas does not distinguish between Brittany and Britain but he is presumably referring to Brittany in this case. Cf. *VC* I: 5, where *sinus Britannicus* certainly refers to a bay on the Breton coast. See also I: 21 (n. 275) on *sinus Britannicus*.

came from Gaul, were to remain there by order of the king.²⁶⁸ When the venerable father realized that his limbs were violently torn from him,²⁶⁹ his grief and that of his followers is increased. Faced with the weight of such a crime, Columbanus entreats the Lord, the Comforter of all, to take into His own safe-keeping those whom the king's defiance separated from him. Among these was Eustasius, who afterwards became the father of this monastery.²⁷⁰ This disciple and minister to the holy man is dragged away by force and entrusted to his maternal uncle, Mietius, who was bishop of Langres.²⁷¹

The holy man then departed with his companions. It had been twenty years since they had first settled in this wilderness.²⁷² He came to the fortress of Avallon by way of Besançon and Autun.²⁷³ But before he reached Avallon, the guardian of Theuderic's horses rushed at him on the road and attempted to spear the man of God with his lance. But an appropriate²⁷⁴ punishment quickly prevented his malevolent intent. For, the right hand that he had raised against the man of God became numb, and his spear

268 Theuderic follows in effect an ethnic strategy here by removing the troublesome insular contingent (the senior members of the community) from Luxeuil and the other communities. Some monks did leave Luxeuil later to join Columbanus (*VC* I: 27), while Columbanus also mentions a monk named Libranus, undoubtedly an Irishman, who stayed behind in Luxeuil perhaps due to old age or ill health (*Ep.* IV: 3 (*SCO*, pp. 28–29)). It is, however, likely that one result of Theuderic's order was that Luxeuil became a largely Gallo-Frankish community, while Bobbio would be more obviously Irish.

269 Jonas frequently uses *membra* ('members') to mean the saint's following.

270 Jonas uses the term *pater* ('father') here, not *abbas* ('abbot') for Eustasius.

271 On Mietius, *PCBE* IV, 2, p. 1329. Langres is about 92 km from Luxeuil. Bishop Mietius was present at the council of Paris in 614 after Chlothar II had united the kingdoms. On Mietius and his family see Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 29–30. It is worth noting that Langres is important to Jonas in the *VJ*.

272 An important piece of chronological evidence that complements Columbanus's statement in *Ep.* II: 6 (*SCO*, pp. 16–17) where he mentions that he has been living in the Vosges for twelve years. The composition of *Ep.* II has been dated to 603. Both pieces of evidence indicate that Columbanus settled in the Vosges in 590/91.

273 The Roman settlement Aballo was a staging post where fresh horses could be obtained. This is the first mention in the historical record of a fortress there. Avallon appears in the Antonine Itinerary and in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*: indeed, the group were following the old Roman roads as shown on the Peutinger Map, which provides a depiction of the *cursus publicus*, the vast road network which was used by the state-run courier and transportation service of the Roman Empire: see now Talbert, *Rome's World: The Peutinger Map Reconsidered*.

274 The Metz manuscript has *divina* rather than *digna*, and 'divine' could be intended, rather than 'appropriate'.

sunk into the ground before his feet. The man, possessed by a demon, fell in front of the feet of the man of God.²⁷⁵ Columbanus, seeing him struck down by this punishment in his presence, kept him with him all that day and night. And when the day dawned again, Columbanus called him. By the grace of God the man had been cured of the plague and he returned home. Then pressing on to the river *Cora*,²⁷⁶ Columbanus came to the house of a certain noble and religious woman called Theudemand. While he was there, twelve men possessed by a wild demon ran to him raging and writhing on the ground. The man of God cured them at once by prayer. That same day they came to the village which they call *Cora* and there they met five mad men.²⁷⁷ They were soon healed there. From here Columbanus hastened to Auxerre where he spoke to Ragumund, because it was he who was leading him on the way that they were going. ‘Remember, Ragumund, that you will have Chlothar, a man you now despise, for your lord within three years.’ ‘Why do you say such things, my Lord?’ Ragumund replies. ‘Make no mistake’, Columbanus told him, ‘for you will see exactly what I have said if you are still among the living.’²⁷⁸

[I 21] The healing of a mad man, the punishment inflicted on a man, and the restitution of sight to a blind man

Having left Auxerre, Columbanus sees a young man possessed by a demon running quickly towards him. He had run twenty miles as fast as he could. Seeing him, Columbanus stopped and waited until the man, wounded by the demon’s cunning, came. He arrived, tearing at himself, and fell down before the man of God. Columbanus healed him by his prayers and sent him back to his father restored to health.

Next, Columbanus arrived at the city of Nevers, with a bodyguard going before and behind him, in order to take a boat on the Loire that would take them to Brittany and the river mouth.²⁷⁹ When they had

275 A classic punishment miracle. Cf. 1 Kings 13:4. See also Gregory of Tours, *DLH* VI: 6 (trans. Thorpe, p. 334); Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* III: 15, 37 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 182).

276 La Cure, a tributary of the river Yonne.

277 This is now St-Moré, 15 km north-west from Avallon.

278 Jonas again notes Columbanus’s prophecy that Chlothar II would come to power. Chlothar had been defeated by his cousins in 600 and 604 (Fredegar IV: 20, 26, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 13, 17) and had been the underdog in Merovingian dynastic politics.

279 The group took an apparent detour at this stage which may suggest that they received an order from Theuderic II at Auxerre to change route. Turning south to Nevers they left the valley of the Yonne, which flows into the Seine, to access that of the Loire, and thus

arrived there and were slowly and carefully getting into the boat, one of the guards, grabbing an oar, struck one of the monks called Lua, a most holy and devout man.²⁸⁰ The man of God, seeing that one of his followers was struck in his presence, says, 'Why, cruel man, do you pile grief on grief? Is the evil of the crime you have committed not sufficient for your destruction? Why do you strike a wearied member of Christ? Why are you merciless against the merciful? Why do you behave savagely towards the gentle? Remember that you will be struck down by divine punishment in this place in which you have wildly struck a member of Christ!' A punishment soon followed to make good the penalty of the judgement that had been handed down. For later, on the way back, when the man came to the same harbour to cross the river he was struck by divine vengeance and drowned there. Why was it that the Just Judge delayed the vengeance a little, unless it was that the gaze of His saint should not be defiled by the man's punishment?

From there they came to the city of Orléans.²⁸¹ As the king had forbidden them access to the churches, Columbanus, with great sorrow, rests a little, satisfied under a tent, on the banks of the Loire. Since at the time they were running low on provisions, Columbanus sent two monks into the city to get food. One of these was Potentinus, who is still alive and living in a community in Armorica in the environs of the city of Coutances.²⁸² Wandering round the city they found nothing because the

to the intended point of embarkation at Nantes, which was under Theuderic's control. The lower Seine was in the kingdom of Chlothar, while the south side of the lower Loire was in Theudebert's kingdom. The route was thus dictated by a need to stay within Theuderic's territory as far as possible, while also making use of transport on the Loire. The most detailed mapping of the Merovingian kingdoms may be found at the website of Ménestrel (<http://www.menestrel.fr/?lang=en>). Jonas uses the phrase *sinus Britannicus*, literally 'the Breton bay', to refer to the mouth of the Loire. See also de Vogüé, 'En lisant Jonas', p. 83.

280 Lua is an Irish name. He was probably one of the twelve monks who accompanied Columbanus from Bangor.

281 The capital of the kingdom of Burgundy at the beginning of Theuderic's reign (Fredegar IV: 16, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 11).

282 In Late Roman usage Armorica stretched far to the East of modern Brittany, almost reaching the mouth of the Seine. Coutances on the Cotentin peninsula would have been in Armorica, but not Brittany. For Brittany in Jonas, see nn. 92, 267, 279, above. Potentinus would seem to have been one of the Britons associated with Columbanus. Traditionally, his later monastery has been identified as Orval. It was from Orval that the later 'Columbanian' monks Bertin, Omer (Audomar), and Ebertramus came. The *Life of Paternus*, by Venantius Fortunatus, gives us precious evidence for the region in the previous century. On Potentinus, see *PCBE* IV, 2, p. 1510 (Potentinus 2).

hearts of all had been struck by fear of the king, and remained so, but as they were making their way back along the route by which they had entered the city, they met a Syrian woman in a square.²⁸³ When she saw them, she asked who they were. They explain everything and say that they were seeking food but had found nothing. She replies, 'Come, my lords, to the lodging of your servant and take whatever you need. For I, too, am a stranger from the distant land of the Orient.' They joyfully followed her to her home where they sat down to rest until she had brought them some food to take away with them. Her husband, who had long been blind, was sitting next to them. They asked who he was. The woman replies, 'This is my husband, also a Syrian like me, whom I have looked after, as he has been blind for many years.' The monks tell her that if he were brought before Columbanus, the servant of Christ, he might regain his sight through the intercession of the saint's prayer. He becomes resolute in the bonds of faith, on hearing the promised gift, and gets up and followed them with the help of a guide. Then Potentinus told Columbanus about the hospitality these people had given to the foreigners²⁸⁴ and, as he was still speaking, the blind man got up and begged the man of God to restore his sight through his prayers. Seeing the man's faith Columbanus asks everyone to pray for the blind man. Then Columbanus lay down prostrate on the ground for a long time. And rising he touches the man's eyes with his hand and having made the sign of the cross he gave back to the man the sight he had asked for. He, rejoicing at his recovered sight, returned home. It was indeed fitting that those who had not failed to have internal light for their guests should not lack external light.

After that a crowd of demoniacs, whom the demons tormented with a savage frenzy, rush to the man of God to be cured. Health, poured out by the Lord, was given them; for all were healed by the man of God. The people of the city, moved by these miracles, supported the man of God secretly with their gifts. They did not dare give him anything openly because of the guards lest they should incur the anger of the king. From there Columbanus and his companions continue on their way.

283 The presence of Syrians in Orléans is attested to in the works of Gregory of Tours, *DLH* VIII: 1, as well as in other cities in Gaul: Bordeaux (VII: 31), and Paris (X: 26) (trans. Thorpe, pp. 413, 433, 586). Syrians might be seen as evidence of trade with the Middle East. The Syrian lady here is surely intended to bring to mind the good Samaritan.

284 The word is *peregrini*. See Mathisen, '*Peregrini, Barbari, and Cives Romani*'.

[I 22] The boat held back, a theft uncovered, and the provision of supplies in abundance

Sailing along the Loire they come to the city of Tours. There the holy man begs the guards to take the boat into port and allow him to visit the tomb of the blessed confessor Martin.²⁸⁵ The guards refuse and force the oarsmen to move on energetically, urging them to pass the port quickly, while ordering the helmsman to keep the boat mid-stream.²⁸⁶ Seeing this, blessed Columba sadly raises his face to Heaven, complaining that he is so loaded with sorrows that he is not allowed to see the tombs of the saints.²⁸⁷ Although everyone is straining hard, as soon as they came opposite the port, the boat comes to a standstill, as if someone had dropped anchor, and its prow began to turn towards the port. When the guards could not stop it, they reluctantly allow the boat to go where it would. In an amazing way it speeds, as if winged,²⁸⁸ from mid-stream to the port and having reached it opens the way for the man of God. Columbanus gives thanks to the Eternal King, who does not disdain to comply with the wishes of His servants. Having safely landed, Columbanus goes to the tomb of blessed Martin and spends the whole night there in prayer.²⁸⁹ At dawn he was invited to eat by Leupecharius the bishop of that city.²⁹⁰ He did not refuse to go, especially as he wanted to allow the brothers to rest, and so he spent that day with the bishop. When it was time for the meal, Columbanus sat down at table with

285 The fourth-century ascetic, monastic founder, and bishop of Tours whose cult became widespread throughout Western Europe and was popular in early medieval Ireland. Columbanus may have had a particular devotion to Saint Martin as the church site above Annegray was dedicated to Martin.

286 Tours at this time was part of the kingdom of Austrasia and thus under Theudebert's rule: there may, therefore, have been political reasons for not wishing to stop at the city. It is notable that the boat was rowed downstream, neither being under sail nor simply making use of the current.

287 Columbanus often expressed his desire in his letters to the popes to go to Rome to pray at the holy sites there.

288 *Pennigero ceu volatu*: Jonas uses the same terms as Jerome in his *Life of Paul* 8 (*quasi pennigero volatu*) and which also appear in Gildas's *On the Ruin of Britain* I: 20 (*penniger ceu volatus*), both authors especially admired by Columbanus.

289 For the tomb in the fifth and sixth centuries we have the exceptional evidence of Paulinus of Perigueux, Venantius Fortunatus, and Gregory of Tours, especially his *Miracles of Saint Martin*: see Van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*.

290 This bishop is unknown from other sources: *PCBE* IV, 2, p. 1166. Tours was not represented at the Council of Paris in 614 where we have the names of the bishops in attendance.

the bishop who asked him why he was returning to his country. 'Because that dog Theuderic has driven me away from the brothers', Columbanus replies. Then one of the guests named Chrodoald, who was married to one of Theudebert's aunts, but who was a follower of Theuderic's,²⁹¹ replies humbly to the man of God that it was better to drink milk than wormwood. The man of God says to him, 'I know that you want to maintain your fidelity to King Theuderic.' Chrodoald declares that he will keep his oath of fidelity to Theuderic, as he had sworn, for as long as he could. He [Columbanus] says, 'If you are joined in treaty to King Theuderic, you will be happy to act as an envoy from me to your friend and lord. Announce, therefore, to Theuderic that he and his children will be destroyed within three years and that the Lord will annihilate his descent and lineage.' 'Why, servant of God', says the man, 'do you say such things?' 'I am unable to conceal what the Lord has ordered me to reveal', replied Columbanus. All the peoples of Gaul²⁹² saw this fulfilled later, and this confirmed the sentence that had been announced previously to Ragumund.²⁹³

After consuming the meal, the man of God returns to the boat where he finds his companions depressed by a great sadness. On enquiring what had happened, he learnt that those things they had kept on the boat had been stolen during the night and also the gold coins which he had not distributed as alms to the poor.²⁹⁴ Having heard this, Columbanus returns to the tomb of the blessed confessor and complained that he had not spent the night in vigil by the relics of the saint in order that Martin should allow him and his

291 *Amita* ought to refer to the sister of the father, but in this case, it must be to Theudebert's maternal aunt, otherwise she would also have been aunt to Theuderic: the two kings were half-brothers. Chrodoald was a member of the Agilolfing family and an Austrasian nobleman killed on Dagobert's orders in 624 (Fredegar IV: 52, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 43). He was killed by Berthar from Scarponne on the Moselle, possibly the same Count Berthar who appears in *VC* I: 20 and Fredegar IV: 38 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 31–32). On Chrodoald, see Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 62, 242.

292 *Omnes Galliae nationes*: Jonas shows here an awareness that there were different ethnic groups who lived in Gaul – the Franks were the ruling elite, but they were not the only people who lived there. The term *natio* rather than *gens*, which Jonas also uses in other instances, is used for the place of one's birth, whereas *gens* denotes blood relationship. Classical and early medieval grammarians distinguished between both terms, although they were often used interchangeably by medieval authors. See Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* IX: 2.1.

293 *VC* I: 20.

294 It was customary to give alms to the poor in the courtyard outside the basilica and there was even a fresco at the west entrance to Martin's shrine with an inscription on almsgiving. See Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, p. 513.

brothers to be robbed. Without delay, the thief who had stolen the bag of gold began to shout out amidst lashes and bodily torment and to reveal that he had hidden the gold pieces in this place and that.²⁹⁵ Seeing this, all his associates rush to return all that had been stolen and beg the man of God to pardon such a great crime. This miracle strikes terror into all, so that those who heard of it did not dare to touch anything which belonged to the man of God, as if it had been consecrated. After supplying him with necessities Leupecharius says farewell to the man of God.

Rejoicing he came by boat to the town of Nantes where he stayed for a short time. One day a beggar cried out before the entrance to the cell in which the man of God was lodging. Calling his assistant, Columbanus says, 'Give the man who is asking some food as alms.' His assistant replies, 'We have no bread, only a very small amount of flour.' 'How much do you have?' says Columbanus. The assistant stated that he thought he did not have more than a measure of flour.²⁹⁶ 'Then give it all', says Columbanus, 'and save nothing for tomorrow.' Obeying, the assistant gave all of it at once to the beggar, keeping nothing for the needs of the community. And as they were fasting when the third day dawned, having nothing except the grace of hope and faith by which to sustain their wearied bodies, suddenly they hear a banging at the door. When the doorkeeper went to find out what was so urgent that it should disturb the peace of the brothers with the sound of knocking, the man says that he has been sent by his mistress, Procula. She had been warned in a vision to send food to the man of God, Columba, and his companions who were staying in the town of Nantes.²⁹⁷ The man said that the food would be coming soon and that he had been sent ahead to tell them to prepare vessels in which to store it. There were a hundred measures of wine, two hundred of grain, and a hundred of barley.²⁹⁸ The doorkeeper then rushes to tell this to the father. Columbanus says, 'Let them know, assemble the group of brothers so that all together they might pray to the Lord for their benefactress and at the same time give thanks to the Creator

295 Jonas seems to imply that the thief has been identified and arrested, and is currently being tortured, but he leaves out various stages in the narrative.

296 Cf. 1 Kings 17:12–14 and Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* II: 28 (trans. Zimmerman pp. 96–97) where Benedict distributed all of the food from the monastery during a time of famine in Campania. Cf. Jonas *VJ* 13.

297 The story is similar to that in *VC* I: 7, above.

298 *Braces*: this is a Gallic name for a particularly white grain ('blé blanche de Dauphiné'). Barley was used for making beer. See *Rule for Nuns (Regula cuiusdam patris ad virgines)* 12: *braxatorium ad ceruisiam faciendam* ('barley for making beer'). Cf. *bracis* in Niermeyer and *Mittelateinisches Wörterbuch*.

who never fails to comfort His servants in their every need.²⁹⁹ Afterwards let them receive the gift.' Oh wonderful compassion of the Creator! He permits us to be in need, that He may show His bounty by giving to the needy. He permits us to be tempted, that by aiding us in our temptations He may turn the hearts of His servants more fully to Himself. He permits their limbs to be cruelly tortured so that the increase in the number of those cured might identify the doctor.

Another equally noble and pious woman named Doda sent two hundred measures of grain and a hundred of mixed grain. This caused very great shame to the bishop of that city, named Suffronius,³⁰⁰ from whom nothing could be obtained by barter, even when they did not ask for anything by way of a gift. While Columbanus was staying there, a certain woman greatly tormented by a demon came to him together with her daughter who was also possessed by the same wickedness. When Columba saw them, he prayed to the Lord of all for them and after they had been healed he commanded them to return home.³⁰¹

[I 23] The ship carried back by the waves³⁰² and the reverence shown to Columbanus by his enemies

After this Suffronius, bishop of Nantes, together with Count Theudoald, hurried to make preparations for blessed Columbanus to take a ship to Ireland in accordance with the king's command.³⁰³ But the man of God says to them, 'If there is a ship here bound for Ireland let them take all our belongings and my companions on board.'³⁰⁴ I, in the meanwhile, will take

299 This practice is also attested in *Rule for Nuns* 3 (the parallels strengthen the case for Jonas's authorship of the *Rule*). Every gift brought to the monastery was to be taken to the chapel where the monastic community would pray for the benefactor or benefactress.

300 On Suffronius/Sophronius, *PCBE* IV, 2, p. 1828. He is presumably to be equated with bishop Euphronius of Nantes, who is mentioned in the Council of Paris of 614.

301 On demoniacs in Merovingian hagiography, see the classic account by Graus, 'Hagiographie und Dämonenglauben – Zu ihren Funktionen in der Merowingerzeit'.

302 As GC notes, there may be an allusion to Horace, *Odes* I: 14: *o navis, referent in mare te novi fluctus*. An alternative translation, however, would be 'the boat swamped with the waves'.

303 Theudoald was probably the local secular magnate. The name was also that of a monk of Bobbio (*VC* II: 25) and of a Merovingian prince (Gregory of Tours, *DLH* III: 6 (trans. Thorpe, p. 167)).

304 On the flourishing trade between Ireland and western Gaul at this time, see James, 'Ireland and Western Gaul in the Merovingian Period'; J.-M. Picard, *Aquitaine and Ireland in the Middle Ages*.

a skiff down the stream of the Loire until I reach the open sea.’³⁰⁵ Having found a ship which had carried Irish trade³⁰⁶ Columbanus’s companions and all their belongings were taken on board. And now, as the ship headed for the open sea, propelled by the rowers, and with a favourable wind, a huge wave came and forced the ship to return to shore, and having driven it on to dry land, left it there, and the water having been drawn back,³⁰⁷ the sea grew calm in the bay. The boat lay beached for three days.³⁰⁸ Then the captain realized that the ship had been stranded because he had taken on board the belongings of the man of God and his companions. He decided finally to get rid of everything that belonged to the man of God from the ship’s hull. Once he had done this, immediately a succession of waves came and carried the ship out to sea. And so everyone, looking in amazement, understood that it was not God’s will that Columbanus should ever return to Ireland. He then returned to the house he had been staying in without anyone now stopping him from going where he wanted; rather, everyone, as far as they could, supported the man of God with gifts and food. Nor did Columbanus lack protection because in all things he had the aid of the Creator, and He who keeps Israel in the shadow of His wings never sleeps.³⁰⁹ In such a way He surely shows by granting all things to all that He is glorified by all for the distribution of His gifts.

305 In his *Ep.* IV, written to his monks at Luxeuil from Nantes, Columbanus gives the impression that his guards were open to him escaping: ‘Now as I write a messenger has reached me, saying that the ship is ready for me, in which I shall be borne unwilling to my country; but if I escape, there is no guard to prevent it; for they seem to desire this, that I should escape.’ (*Ep.* IV: 8; trans. Walker, *SCO*, p. 35).

306 The later eighth-century *Life of Filibert* 42 mentions Irish ships that landed at the island of Noirmoutier (south of Nantes) that supplied Filibert and his monks with shoes and clothing.

307 *Collectioque fluctu* might refer either to the ebbing of the sea, or, as ML suggested, to water in the hold of the boat. We have ignored the comma which Krusch placed after *fluctu*.

308 Cf. Matthew 12:39–41. The prophet Jonah remained in the whale’s belly for three days and nights. Columbanus *Ep.* IV: 8: ‘If I am cast into the sea like Jonah, who himself is also called Columba in Hebrew, pray that someone may take the place of the whale to bring me back in safe concealment by a happy voyage, to restore your Jonah to the land he longs for’ (trans. Walker, *SCO*, pp. 34–35). Jonas may here be drawing out the parallels between Jonah and Columbanus which the saint himself explicitly mentions in his letter.

309 Psalms 121:4; 17:8.

[I 24] The arrival of Columbanus at the court of King Chlothar and the king's delight

Having stayed there for a while, Columbanus afterwards goes to Chlothar, the son of King Chilperic, who was ruling the Neustrian Franks who inhabit the outer limits of Gaul by the Ocean.³¹⁰ Chlothar had already heard how often and with what injuries Brunhild and Theuderic had persecuted the man of God.³¹¹ When the king saw Columbanus he welcomes him as if he were a gift from heaven and joyfully begged him, saying that if he wished to remain within the borders of his kingdom,³¹² he himself would serve him as much as he desired. But Columbanus said that he did not wish to remain there, but wanted rather to extend his ascetic exile and to reduce the excuses for hostilities against him. So Chlothar kept him for as many days as he could and was reprimanded by the saint for certain errors which are hardly ever absent from a royal court.³¹³ Chlothar promises to correct all of these things himself according to the saint's command. For Chlothar was a man accomplished in the love of wisdom. He therefore rejoiced in the gift which he had received and for which he had hoped.

While Columbanus was staying with Chlothar, a quarrel breaks out between Theudebert and Theuderic. They are both disputing about the boundaries of their kingdoms and both send legates to Chlothar seeking assistance one against the other.³¹⁴ Chlothar takes care to tell Columbanus

310 Chlothar II (584–629), King of Neustria from 597, and King of the Franks after he united the Merovingian kingdoms in 613, until his death in 629. His father Chilperic I was assassinated in 584 not long after the boy's birth. He ruled Neustria, the western Merovingian kingdom, following the regency of his mother, Fredegund, who died in 597. He fought against his nephews, Theuderic II of Burgundy and Theudebert II of Austrasia, but was defeated by them at the battle of Dormelles in 600. His kingdom was then greatly reduced to the regions of Beauvais, Amiens, and Rouen (Fredegar IV: 20, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 13), which Jonas accurately describes as 'the outer limits of Gaul by the Ocean'. The Ocean here refers to the English Channel. Jonas's comment on the geographical location of Neustria suggests that he had his Italian readers in mind here as his Frankish readers would have been well aware where this was.

311 Chlothar's enemies.

312 As in *VC* I: 6.

313 Fredegar IV: 42 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 36) notes about Chlothar's character: 'This Chlotar, who was strong-minded and well-read, was also a God-fearing man, for he was a munificent patron of churches and priests, an almsgiver to the poor, kindly disposed to all and full of piety. On the other hand, his devotion to the chase was excessive and he took too much notice of the views of women young and old, for which his followers censured him.'

314 This concerned Alsace, which was under Theuderic's control. However, in 610,

about this, asking whether he would advise him to support one and fight against the other. To Chlothar he replies, filled with the spirit of prophecy, that he should commit himself to neither plan, for within three years both kingdoms would come into his hands.³¹⁵ Chlothar, seeing that such things were prophesied by the man of God, decided to aid neither of the kings, but faithfully awaited the time that had been promised to him,³¹⁶ and afterwards he gained the triumph of victory.

[I 25] His passage through Paris and his meeting and curing a mad man

After this the man of God urged Chlothar to give him help to travel through Theudebert's kingdom so that if he could he might travel to Italy by crossing the chain of the Alps.³¹⁷ He was therefore given an escort which would take him as far as Theudebert. So, setting out again, Columbanus came to the city of Paris.³¹⁸ When he arrived there, he met a man at the gate who was possessed by an unclean spirit, who was raving, tearing at his clothes, and babbling nonsense.³¹⁹ He asks the man of God tetchily: 'What are you doing in this place, man of God?' He had been shouting for a long time in a husky voice as Columbanus, the man of God, was approaching from afar. When the man of God saw him, he says: 'Depart, pestilential spirit, depart, and do not dare to possess any longer bodies which have been washed in the baptism of Christ. Submit to the power of God and tremble at the invocation of the name of Christ.' But when the

Theudebert raided the region, and defeated Theuderic's forces. Alsace was ceded to Theudebert, along with Saintois (south of Toul), the Thurgau (south of Constanze), and Campania (Champagne), 'which were the subject of frequent disputes', as Fredegar IV: 37 notes (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 29–30).

315 Jonas is again stressing the prophecy mentioned in *VC* I: 20 and 22.

316 In 611, Theuderic sent a delegation to Chlothar to ask him not to intervene in the war with Theudebert. Chlothar signed a non-aggression pact, and promised not to intervene in the war, in return for the Duchy of Dentelin which he had lost to Theudebert in 600 (Fredegar IV: 20, 37, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 13, 30).

317 Theudebert's influence extended as far south as Lake Constance and the region of *Alamannia*, whose duke, Gunzo, according to the *Lives of Gallus* by Wetti and Walahfrid Strabo, acknowledged Frankish overlordship. For a full discussion, see Schär, *Gallus: Der Heilige in seiner Zeit*, pp. 221–29.

318 Paris would not have been controlled by Chlothar II at this time. He had been excluded from the Treaty of Andelot of 587 (*DLH* IX: 20; trans. Thorpe, pp. 502–09).

319 Saint Martin healed a leper at the gates of Paris (Sulpicius Severus, *Life of Martin* 18.3; cf. *DLH* VIII: 33; trans. Thorpe, pp. 465–67).

demon resisted for a long time with fierce and terrible strength, the man of God puts his hand into the man's mouth and grabs his tongue.³²⁰ He commands the demon to leave by the power of God. Then, rending the man with a terrible force so that bonds could scarcely restrain him, the demon left his body by a splurge of excrement and vomiting. He left so bad a stench for those standing there that they believed they could have more easily endured sulphuric odours.

[I 26] The hospitality of Chagneric and Authari, the benediction of their households and consecration of their children

From there Columbanus goes to the town of Meaux. The noble man, Chagneric, a close companion of Theudebert's, a wise man and a beloved advisor of the king, who was fortified by the wisdom of nobility, lived there.³²¹ He welcomed the man of God with great joy and promised to help him reach the court of Theudebert. He told Columbanus that he would not need other companions³²² from the king's service. He put off the help of the others in order to keep the man of God with himself for as long as possible and so that his home might be ennobled by his teaching. The man of God therefore blessed Chagneric's house and blessing his daughter, Burgundofara, who was still a child, consecrated her to the Lord.³²³ We will tell more about her below in subsequent chapters.³²⁴

Following on his journey Columbanus came to a certain villa called Ussy on the river Marne.³²⁵ He was welcomed by Authari, whose wife was

320 At Trier, Saint Martin put his hand down the throat of a demoniac and the demon exited in a similar manner (Sulpicius Severus, *Life of Martin* 17).

321 Chagneric, head of the Faronids, a powerful Frankish aristocratic family and part of the Agilolfing dynasty, was Count of Meaux. His estates were concentrated in that region. His brother Chagnoald had been an important figure at Childebert II's court in Metz (see *Life of Agilus (Vita Agili)* 1, 4). On the familial connections between Chagneric and Authari, see Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc*, p. 388; Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 65–69.

322 The word *comites* can mean 'companions' or it might have a more official meaning (i.e. 'counts').

323 Burgundofara, who later became the first abbess of *Eboriacus* (VC II: 7, 11–22, below), founded on her father's estate; it would become known as 'Fara's monastery' or Faremoutiers. Her will survives from 633/34. See Guérout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare'.

324 See VC II: 7, 10, 11–22. An indication that Jonas conceived of his work in two volumes and that the Faremoutiers section was an integral part of this. See introduction, section 9.

325 Ussy-sur-Marne, 15 km from Meaux.

called Aiga.³²⁶ They had young sons³²⁷ whom the mother brought to the man of God to be blessed. Seeing the mother's faith, Columbanus consecrated the little children with his blessing.³²⁸ They later, when they had reached adolescence, were held in high esteem, first by King Chlothar and then by Dagobert.³²⁹ After they had achieved worldly glory they began to grow anxious lest they should lose eternal glory out of concern for that of the world. The eldest, Ado, retired of his own accord and built a monastery in the Jouarre forests under the Rule of blessed Columbanus.³³⁰ The youngest, Dado, built a monastery in the forests of the Brie by the stream of Rebais also under the Rule of Columbanus.³³¹ Such great grace abounded in the man

326 The visit was probably set up by Chagneric, a relative of Authari. There was a close connection between the two families and both were members of the Agilolfing clan. Jonas's mention of Authari's wife was deliberate. The name Aiga is a diminutive of Agila, an Agilolfing name (Le Jan, *Famille et Pouvoir*, p. 388 n. 55). See also Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 69–70.

327 The boys are *infra infantiae annis detenti* ('confined within the years of infancy'), which, as GC reminds us, could be anything up to the age of seven.

328 This is the counter narrative to Columbanus's refusal to bless the illegitimate children of Theuderic II in VC I 19.

329 Aiga's sons were Ado, Dado, also known as Audoin, and Rado, who is not mentioned here but only in the later *Life of Audoin* and *Life of Agilus*. Rado founded the monastery of Radolium (Reuil) south of the Marne, about 4 km from Jouarre (*Life of Agilus* 14). All three brothers were sent to the royal court in Paris where other members of the elite were sent at this time, on which, see Hen, *Roman Barbarians*, pp. 100–06.

330 Ado founded a nunnery at Jouarre, not far from Meaux, where he appointed his first cousin, Theudechildis, abbess. Theudechildis was succeeded by her first cousin, Agilberta. Theudechildis's brother was Agilbert, bishop of the West Saxons and later bishop of Paris, who was buried in the crypt along with other members of the family. On Agilbert's career, see now Hammer, "'Holy Entrepreneur": Agilbert, a Merovingian Bishop between Ireland, England, and Francia'. Krusch (p. 210 n. 1) regarded Ado's foundation as a house simply for women (*agitur enim de monasterio virginum*). According to later tradition Ado also founded a male community at Jouarre. If he did so, it was only, as the Marquise du Maillé remarked, 'une assez petite chose' ('something relatively small'): Maillé, *Les cryptes de Jouarre*, pp. 71–72. The evidence for its foundation is to be found in the third *Life of Audoin* and in that of Agilus, both of which belong to the Carolingian period (see Godding, *Prêtres en Gaule mérovingienne*, p. xxii). Maillé's remains the major study of Jouarre.

331 Dado/Audoin served as referendary for Dagobert I (Fredegar IV: 78, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 66). He founded Rebais while still a layman in 635 and was appointed to the bishopric of Rouen in 641. He was one of the most influential Frankish nobles of the mid-seventh century. His *Life* was written around 680: see the translation and commentary in Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiograph*, pp. 133–65. Audoin appointed his kinsman Agilus, a monk at Luxeuil, as the first abbot of Rebais. Rebais has been seen as a model for later monastic foundations. The land for the foundation of Rebais was given by the king (Dagobert I) and a copy of Dagobert's

of God that whosoever he consecrated was found to be perservering in good behaviour when they died. Let it be rightly said at once³³² that those whom he diligently warned rejoiced afterwards that they had merited freedom from punishment. Nor did the person, supported by the help of such a man, undeservedly obtain the addition of grace who, bound by Columbanus's learning, refused to deviate from the narrow path of a just life.

[I 27] The hospitality of Theudebert: settling in Bregenz and the rebuke to the pagans. The arrival of birds, the allocation of fruits, and the counsel of an angel revealed through a vision

From there Columbanus came to Theudebert. When Theudebert saw him he joyfully welcomed him to his residences.³³³ Many of the brothers had already followed him from Luxeuil, and he received them as if they were booty taken from the enemy.³³⁴ Theudebert promised to find attractive places within the boundaries of his kingdom and that they would offer the servants of God every opportunity of preaching to the neighbouring

foundation charter from 635 survives which states that all three brothers took part in the foundation: *Die Urkunden der Merowinger* 1, pp. 126–28. On the royal immunity for Rebais, see Wood, 'Jonas, the Merovingians, and Pope Honorius', pp. 114–17. An episcopal exemption for Rebais was granted in 637 by Burgundofaro, bishop of Meaux, which is the first authentic episcopal exemption. On the Rebais exemption, see Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, pp. 67–70. The fact that Jonas fails to mention this important episcopal exemption may suggest that he had reservations about the extent of family involvement in this and other monastic institutions linked to the Faronids (on this, see Tatum, *Hagiography, Family and Columbanan Monasticism in Seventh-Century Francia*, pp. 55–72). The Rule introduced in Rebais was a Mixed Rule that combined elements from Columbanus's monastic practices with those from the Rule of Benedict. See Ó Cróinín, 'A Tale of Two Rules: Benedict and Columbanus'.

332 As ML and GC point out, *opido* means at once, and not 'in the town'.

333 Fredegar IV: 16 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 11) notes that Theudebert's residence was at Metz.

334 In the letter which Columbanus wrote to his community from Nantes in 610 (*Ep.* IV; *SCO*, pp. 26–37) Columbanus advised Athala, who was prior, and the other monks to follow him if dissensions further split the community (*Ep.* IV: 2–3; *SCO*, pp. 26–29), particularly over disagreements concerning the Easter computus. Athala and some other monks from Luxeuil probably joined Columbanus in Metz at this time, and Jonas's note here indicates that the Luxeuil community was split by further disagreements after Columbanus's banishment. Columbanus recommended Waldelenus be appointed prior should Athala choose to leave (*Ep.* IV: 2; *SCO*, pp. 26–29). The fact that Eustasius, and not Waldelenus, was later chosen as abbot, suggests that the former may have belonged to the faction that opposed some aspects of Columbanus's practices.

peoples all around.³³⁵ The man of God replies to the king, 'If you provide support for your promise and if your pledge is not broken by the blow of deceit, I will stay for a while and explore whether it is possible to sow faith into the hearts of the neighbouring peoples.' The king then gave him the choice of finding a place by trial and error that would be pleasing to him and his companions in whatever part of the kingdom he wished.³³⁶ Columbanus accordingly found a place which was praised through the approval of all. This was a town, situated within *Germania*,³³⁷ though close to the river Rhine, called Bregenz, which had long ago been destroyed.³³⁸ But what the man of God did at that time while sailing along the Rhine must not be passed over in silence.³³⁹

One day while they were sailing along the Rhine they came to a city which the ancients called Mainz.³⁴⁰ When he arrived there the oarsmen, who had been sent by the king to aid the man of God, tell him they have friends

335 We have translated the term *gentes* here as 'peoples', although in Jonas it can also mean 'barbarians', as in the related term *gentilis*. Cf. the comment of Jonas on Abbot Bertulf (*VC* II: 23) as *genere nobilis, licet gentilis* ('of noble birth, although barbarian'). The word can also mean 'pagan', although Jonas tends to use *pagani* to refer to pagans as in his reference to Luxeuil (*paganorum vetusta tempora: VC* I: 10). Cf. *VV* 7 (*alia vero paganis opposita*). Columbanus expressed a desire to undertake a mission to the pagan *gentes* but when someone told him about their lukewarmness he changed his mind about it (*Ep.* IV: 5; *SCO*, pp. 30–31). Mission to the pagans was more central to the next generation of Columbanian monks, especially Eustasius, Jonas himself, and Amandus: see Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 31–42.

336 Cf. *VC* I: 6, 24, 30. Effectively, Bregenz, like Columbanus's other foundations, would have been under royal control. Jonas consistently tries to minimize the role of kings and outsiders in the foundation process of Columbanus's monasteries as he had concerns about the extent of external influence on the running of the communities.

337 Jonas uses the classical geographical term for the regions east of the Rhine and north of the Danube. In fact, Bregenz lay not in *Germania* but in *Rhaetia*.

338 A Celtic settlement at the east of Lake Constance. The Romans conquered *Brigantion* in 15 BC and it became a Roman camp and then municipality around 50 AD and the Roman naval base for Lake Constance. It was situated along the military road linking *Pannonia* with Gaul and Germany with Italy. In 259/60 the town was destroyed by the *Alamanni*, a Germanic people who settled in the area in around 450.

339 A *Carmen Navale* or 'Columbanus's Boat Song' survives which was inspired by a voyage down the Rhine. The poem was ascribed to Columbanus, but is now thought to have been written later in the Carolingian period by an Irish abbot (also named Columbanus). The poem is translated in *SCO*, pp. 190–92.

340 The *castrum* of *Mogontiacum* was founded by the Roman general Drusus in around 13 BC. It was an important Roman military town due to its strategic position at the confluence of the Main and the Rhine rivers. Remains of Roman troop ships and a patrol boat from the late fourth century were discovered in the 1980s. The city was the provincial capital

in the city who would give them food which they needed. The resources they had for purchasing goods were running low after their long journey. The man of God tells them to go, but when they had left, they found nothing. They returned, and in reply to the questions of the man of God say they had been unable to obtain anything from their friends. Then Columbanus says, 'Let me go to a friend of mine for a little while.' The men wonder how he had a friend there where he had never been before. Columbanus leaves and goes to the church. When he enters he throws himself on the floor and in a long prayer seeks the protection of God, the source of all goodness. At that moment the bishop of the city leaves his house and goes to the church and finding Columbanus there asks him who he is.³⁴¹ Columbanus tells him he is a foreigner.³⁴² The bishop says, 'If you need food, go to my house and take as much as you need with you.' When he thanked both the Creator who had inspired him and the man who had offered the pile of necessities that were wanted, the latter presses him yet more ardently and orders him to take everything that was needed.³⁴³ He himself sends servants quickly to the ship,³⁴⁴ and orders all except for one guard to come and take away whatever they want. In case this should seem to anyone to have happened by chance, the bishop was subsequently in the habit of publicly asserting that he had never before been so inspired in giving out necessities. And he testified that he went to the church that day by divine admonition on account of the merit of blessed Columbanus, and for no other reason.

They next come to their intended destination.³⁴⁵ While the man of God was travelling over every part of the countryside he announces³⁴⁶

of *Germania Superior* and was incorporated into the Frankish kingdoms with Clovis's conquest of the kingdom of Cologne in 508.

341 The bishop was Leudegarius or Lesio whom Fredegar terms *beatos et apostolicos vir* ('a blessed and apostolic man') (IV: 38, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 31). He disliked Theudebert and was a partisan of King Theuderic although this did not prevent him from helping Columbanus. On Lesio, see *PCBE* IV, 2, p. 1151.

342 Jonas undoubtedly expects the reader to understand *peregrinus* also in its religious sense: as an ascetic exile. See Mathisen, '*Peregrini, Barbari, and Cives Romani*'.

343 The subject of this sentence is grammatically unclear: logically, the first *ille* must be Columbanus, but the second would seem to be the bishop. One would have expected a contrast between *ille* and *iste*.

344 The subject is surely the bishop here, and the *pueri* are his servants: Columbanus had after all set out alone.

345 According to the later ninth-century *Life of Gall* by Wetti, a priest of Arbon, Willimar, advised them to settle in Bregenz (Wetti, *Life of Gall* 5).

346 We follow ML in accepting the reading *ait*, which is to be found in several manuscripts, rather than Krusch's *alet*, which is not attested elsewhere in Latin.

that he did not like it, but nevertheless promises that he would stay there for a short while in order to spread the faith among the local peoples.³⁴⁷ The tribes in the vicinity are *Suevi*.³⁴⁸ While he was staying there and was going among the inhabitants of this place, he discovered that they wished to perform a profane sacrifice. They had a large cask that they call a *cupa*, which held about twenty measures.³⁴⁹ It was full of beer and had been placed in their midst. When the man of God approached it he asks what they wanted to do with it. They tell him that they want to make an offering to their God, Woden, whom, as others say, they affirm to be Mercury.³⁵⁰ When Columbanus hears about this pestilential work, he blows into the cask. Astonishingly, it breaks with a crash and pieces shatter everywhere, and the great force of the explosion causes the beer

347 Again, Jonas uses the word *gentes*, which one might translate as 'pagans': see the discussion in n. 335, above. For the Christianization of this region and Columbanus's role in this process, see Jäschke, 'Kolumban von Luxeuil und sein Wirken im alemannischen Raum'; Römer, *Alamannen, Christen: Frühmittelalter am Bodensee*. *Alamannia* was under Frankish overlordship during this period, on which, see Wood, *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period*.

348 The term *Suevi* is applied to numerous different groups in the Germanic world: here they are clearly *Alamanni*. Cf. their appearance as brigands near Annegray in *VC* I: 8.

349 Although Jonas implies that this is an unusual word, *cupa* is attested in Classical authors: Lewis and Short, p. 498.

350 Although Jonas states that he has a source, this is the earliest known reference to the Germanic God Woden in the historical record. The name does, however, appear shortly after (as GB notes) in Fredegar III: 65 (ed. Krusch, p. 110) (referring to the Lombard migration). It also appears in the *Origo gentis Langobardorum* (I), ed. Azzara and Gasparri, pp. 4–5, which has been dated to 672/78, but which is preserved alongside the *Edictum Rothari* of 643. Jonas's Italian origins, and his time spent at Bobbio, may suggest an Italian source for his statement. Woden appears in various guises throughout the Germanic world: the extent to which the different emanations should be understood as reflecting a single cult is questionable: Helm, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* 1, pp. 251–69. The A 3 and Metz manuscripts omit the reference to the Roman god Mercury, which may be a later addition from Paul the Deacon's later eighth-century *History of the Lombards* I: 9: but the majority of manuscripts, including the ninth-century St Gallen 553, have this phrase, which led Krusch to include it in his editions and which we have left here. Little is known about the pagan religion of the *Alamanni*. Runic inscriptions on *fibulae*, belt buckles, and weapons survive from this period in *Alamannia*. The famous Nordendorf fibula from the early seventh century records the name of the pagan gods Wodan and Donar but it is not clear whether it was intended as a pagan invocation or a Christian charm against them. Agathias (*Histories* I: 7) portrays the Alamans as pagan in the mid-sixth century: Cameron, 'Agathias on the Early Merovingians', p. 109. The Christianization of the *Alamanni* accelerated from the late sixth century and during the course of the seventh century.

to spill out.³⁵¹ Then it is clear that the Devil had been concealed in the cask and that he ensnared the souls of the participants with the profane drink. When the barbarians see this they are stunned and say that the man of God had a great deal of puff to split a well-bound cask in that manner.³⁵² Columbanus rebukes them with the words of the Gospel so that they would stop performing these sacrifices and commands them to return to their homes.³⁵³ Many were then converted to the faith of Christ through the preaching and teaching of the blessed man and were baptized. And like a good shepherd he led others, who had already been baptized, but who were held in profane error, back to the observance of the Gospel teaching and the bosom of the Church.

At that time Theuderic and Brunhild were not only raging against Columbanus but they were also persecuting the most holy Desiderius, bishop of the city of Vienne. They first, having condemned him to exile, strove to subject him to numerous assaults. Finally, they crowned him with glorious martyrdom. His written deeds relate for what and how many adversities the glorious man deserved to hold triumphs before God.³⁵⁴

While Columbanus and his companions were staying in the city of Bregenz there was a period of harsh famine there. But although they were without food, the faith with which he asked for food from the Lord remained inviolate and unshaken. After their bodies had been exhausted

351 This miracle account should be read alongside the other beer miracles in the *Life*. Cf. *IV* 7, and Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* II: 3 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 62).

352 For the humorous element in this account, see Shanzer, 'Laughter and Humour in the Early Medieval Latin West', p. 43.

353 Columbanus prescribed various penances for anyone who ate or drank *iuxta fana* ('beside the temples') (*Penitential* B 24 (*SCO*, pp. 178–79)).

354 Desiderius of Vienne was stoned to death in 607, according to Fredegar IV: 32 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 21), but Jonas places his martyrdom around the time that Columbanus was in Bregenz, thus around 610. He may have derived his date for the martyrdom from the *Passion of Desiderius* by the Visigothic king Sisebut (see the translation by Fear, *Lives of the Visigothic Fathers*). Sisebut provides no date, but follows the martyrdom with an account of the deaths of Theuderic and Brunhild. A similar date is implied by the anonymous *Passion of Desiderius*, thought by Bruno Krusch to be an eighth-century composition. In chapter 16, it describes the translation of the saint, which it places in the reign of Chlothar, in the fourth year after the martyrdom: this would fit a date for the martyrdom of c.610, but no earlier. Although Jonas is usually said to have been following Sisebut, it is not inconceivable that he was using the anonymous text, or an earlier version thereof. Significantly, in his chronology, Fredegar appears to be following none of the surviving written versions. *PCBE* IV, 1, pp. 566–69 (Desiderius 13) accepts Fredegar's date, but that implied by Jonas and by the anonymous *Passion* is not impossible.

by three days of starvation, as great a number of birds appeared as the quails that covered the camp of the Israelites, so that the birds covered the whole countryside there.³⁵⁵ The man of God understood that this banquet had been scattered all over the countryside to answer his and his companions' need. Nor did the birds appear anywhere other than in the place that he was staying. He orders his companions first to give thanks and praise to the Creator and then to take the birds as a banquet. It was a wonderful and astonishing miracle; the birds were caught just as the father's commands urged, nor did they attempt to fly away. The manna of birds remained there for three days. On the fourth day, a certain bishop from one of the neighbouring cities, warned by divine inspiration, sent a supply of grain to blessed Columbanus.³⁵⁶ When the supply of grain arrived, the Omnipotent, who had furnished the winged food to those in need, immediately commanded the phalanxes of birds to depart. We learned this from Eustasius, who was present at that time, and together with the others obedient to the servant of God.³⁵⁷ He said that none in the company had ever seen birds of such a kind before and that the meat was so flavoursome that it surpassed a royal feast. Oh wonderful gift of divine mercy! When earthly food was wanting to the worshippers of Christ, then they were given celestial food, just as is told about Israel: 'He had given them the bread of heaven'.³⁵⁸ But when earthly food arrived, then, what had been supplied freely was taken away.

Around this time Columbanus, having withdrawn to a cave in the wilderness, was subduing his body by fasting, and was eating nothing apart from the wild fruit, which we have previously mentioned.³⁵⁹ A bear came stealthily and, with the usual voracity of that wild beast, began to devour³⁶⁰ the food Columbanus needed and to carry all the fruit away

355 Exodus 16:13. Jonas is modelling Columbanus's exiled community in *Alamannia* on the Israelites in the Desert. Columbanus is associated with Moses, leading his people to the Promised Land.

356 The neighbouring cities are Constance and Chur, both of which had bishoprics at this time.

357 Eustasius, who became abbot of Luxeuil and was one of Jonas's eyewitness sources, must have left his uncle Mietius of Langres, who had prevented him from travelling with Columbanus (*VC* I 20), and joined the saint at Theudebert's court at Metz, or perhaps further up the Rhine. Jonas deals with the abbacy of Eustasius in *VC* II: 7–10.

358 Psalms 77:24.

359 The blueberries of the Vosges mentioned in *VC* I: 9.

360 *Delambere* means 'to lick' but also to 'devour/ consume'. See *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch* s.v.

in its mouth. When meal-time came, Columbanus sent Chagnoald, his assistant, to bring the usual quantity of fruit.³⁶¹ Chagnoald went and saw the bear wandering among the fruit trees and briars and licking the fruit. He returns quickly and tells the father. Columbanus tells him to go and set aside a portion of the fruit trees for [the bear's] food and to order him to leave the other part for himself [i.e. for Columbanus]. Chagnoald went and carried out the father's commands. He divided the fruitbearing trees and briars with his staff, and tells the wild beast to eat what, according to the command of the man of God, was in its part and to leave the other part for the use of the man of God. What amazing obedience in a wild beast! The bear did not even dare to take food from the prohibited part but, as long as the man of God remained in that place, sought food only from the trees that had been assigned to it.³⁶²

Meanwhile, Columbanus thought about entering the territory of the Wends, who are also called Slavs, so as to illuminate their darkened minds with the light of the Gospel and to open the way of truth to those who had always wandered in error.³⁶³ When he was about to carry out his intentions, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision and showed him in a little circle the outline of the earth, just as the circle of the world is usually drawn with a pen in a book.³⁶⁴ 'You see', the angel said, 'that the entire world remains empty. Go to the right or the left where you will that you may enjoy the fruits of your labours.' Columbanus then realized that progress in faith for this people was not ready to hand and he remained there until he could continue on into Italy.³⁶⁵

361 Chagnoald was a monk of Luxeuil, the son of Chagneric whom Columbanus visited at his estate near Meaux and who may have set up the meeting between Columbanus and his father. He was the brother of bishop Burgundofaro of Meaux and of Abbess Burgundofara. He was involved in the foundation of *Eboriacus* (later Faremoutiers) on his family estate and later became bishop of Laon. Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 65–66.

362 The obedience of the bear as in *VC* I: 8, 17; *VV* 6. Cf. Jerome, *Life of Hilarion* 31.

363 This is the first mention in the historical record of the Wendish Slavs. Wends is a historical name for the West Slavs who lived near Germanic settlement areas. See Fredegar IV: 48, 68 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 39–40, 56–58). On this, see also Curta, 'Hiding Behind a Piece of Tapestry: Jordanes and the Slavic Venethi'; Curta, 'Slavs in Fredegar and Paul the Deacon: medieval *gens* or "scourge of God"?'.

364 On this reference to an early medieval T-O map, which depicted the world as a circle divided by lines into sections representing the three continents, see O'Loughlin, 'Map Awareness in the Mid-Seventh Century: Jonas' *Vita Columbani*'.

365 Columbanus noted in his letter from Nantes in 610 that he wanted to preach the Gospel to the *gentes* but was persuaded otherwise by one of his associates who reported their lack

[I 28] The war between the kings, the revelation of the man of God, and the betrayal of Theudebert

In the meantime, the conflict between Theuderic and Theudebert escalated and each one, priding himself on the strength of his people,³⁶⁶ rages against his brother with the intention of killing him. During this time the man of God goes to Theudebert and urges him to put aside the dawning pride of arrogance and to become a cleric:³⁶⁷ having placed himself in the Church he would be subject to sacred religion, and so would not suffer the loss of eternal life as well as the destruction of his earthly kingdom. The king and his companions laugh at this; they had never heard of a Merovingian on the throne who had voluntarily become a cleric.³⁶⁸ Having, therefore, been ridiculed by all, blessed Columba says, 'If he does not voluntarily become a cleric he will soon be compelled to do so against his will.' After saying this, the man of God returns to his cell and subsequent events soon prove the truth of the prophecy.³⁶⁹

Immediately after this Theuderic provoked Theudebert into battle and, having decisively beaten him near Toul, puts him to flight.³⁷⁰ Theuderic, gathering a strong army, then pursues him. Theudebert likewise calls on many tribes to increase his power,³⁷¹ and comes to the fortress of Tolbiac to do battle.³⁷² Battle was joined there and countless phalanxes of men

of interest (*Ep.* IV: 5; *SCO*, pp. 30–31). This is the only appearance of an angel in Book One and conveniently explains Columbanus's decision not to undertake missionary work to the pagans outside the Frankish sphere of influence. An angel likewise guided Audoin back from Rome across the Alps to Gaul (*Life of Audoin* 10).

366 *Gentes* ('peoples'): presumably meaning Austrasians and Burgundians.

367 This could just mean that he would have entered the clergy, rather than the monastic life, although it later became common for political figures to be sent to monasteries which served as prisons for political prisoners like the Neustrian mayor of the palace, Ebroin, who was imprisoned in Luxeuil in the 670s. On this practice, see de Jong, 'Monastic prisoners or opting out?'

368 There was, however, at least one Merovingian who willingly became a cleric: Chlodovald (venerated as Saint Cloud), the son of Chlodomer (r. 511–24). See Gregory of Tours, *DLH* III: 18 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 181–82).

369 Fredegar IV: 38 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 31–32) simply notes that Theuderic was 'stripped of his royal clothing' (*vestis regalibus ... expoliatus*) at Cologne after his capture.

370 May 612 (Fredegar IV: 38, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 30–32).

371 Again, the word *gentes* is used: Fredegar IV: 38 says he fought 'with Saxons, Thuringians and other peoples from across the Rhine or elsewhere that he had been able to summon' (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 31).

372 Tolbiac, or Zülpich, 30 km south-west of Cologne. The Franks fought the *Alamanni*

from both armies fell. Theudebert was at length defeated and flees the field.

At that time the man of God was staying in the wilderness, content with the service of only one attendant, Chagnoald. At the hour when battle was engaged at Tolbiac, the man of God was sitting on the trunk of a rotten oak reading a book. Suddenly, he was overcome by sleep and he saw what was happening between the two kings. He soon wakes and calls his attendant whom he told about the bloody battle of the kings. He grieves for the loss of much human blood. His attendant rashly says, 'My father, provide help to Theudebert through your prayers, so that he may defeat our common enemy, Theuderic.' To this blessed Columbanus replies, 'You give advice that is stupid and contrary to religion. For the Lord who asked us to pray for our enemies did not wish it so. What He wishes to come of them is already in the judgement of the Just Judge.' The attendant afterwards enquired about the time of day and the hour of the battle, and found out that it was just as had been revealed to the man of God.

Theuderic pursued Theudebert, who was captured by the treachery of his own men and sent to his grandmother, Brunhild.³⁷³ When his grandmother received him, she, in her fury (for she had taken sides with Theuderic), ordered Theudebert to be made a cleric. But not many days after he had been ordained she ordered him to be killed, exceedingly wickedly.³⁷⁴

here (*DLH* II: 37; trans. Thorpe, p. 153): this is often assumed, on no grounds whatsoever, to be the same as Clovis's victory over the *Alamanni* (*DLH* II: 30; trans. Thorpe, p. 143). When Jonas mentions Clovis's victory in *VV* 2 he does not associate it with Tolbiac/Zülpich. Fredegar IV: 38 gives an evocative description of the fierce battle: 'It is said that from time immemorial no such battle had ever been fought by the Franks and the other peoples; the carnage on both sides was such that in the fighting line there was no room for the slain to fall down. They stood upright in their ranks, corpse supporting corpse, as if they still lived' (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 31).

373 Fredegar IV: 38 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 31–32) does not mention that Theudebert was betrayed by his own men, only that he was captured by Count Berthar (mentioned in *VC* I: 20).

374 Fredegar IV: 38 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 31–32) notes that Theudebert was taken in chains to Chalon-sur-Saône while his son, Merovech, was killed by one of Theuderic's soldiers who bashed his brains out on a stone. Fredegar does not mention that Theudebert was killed on Brunhild's orders, although he does say that Chlothar later charged her with his death (among others) (IV: 42, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 35).

**[I 29] The death of Theuderic and the slaughter of his children.
The fulfilment of the prophecy made to Chlothar**

Not long after this, Theuderic, while he was in the town of Metz, was divinely struck down and died in the blazing heat of a blazing fire.³⁷⁵ After this Brunhild raised his son, Sigibert, to the kingship. And so Chlothar, mindful of the prophecy of the man of God, gathered an army to try to take over the bounds of the kingdom which ought to be subject to his authority. Sigibert advanced with his battalions of troops to do battle against him.³⁷⁶ But Chlothar captured and killed him, and also seized his five brothers, the sons of Theuderic, and their great-grandmother Brunhild. He killed the boys one by one.³⁷⁷ Brunhild, however, was first placed shamefully on a camel and paraded before the troops. Then she was tied to the tails of wild horses and wretchedly lost her life.³⁷⁸ Chlothar, having utterly and completely annihilated Theuderic's lineage, acquired sole rule of three kingdoms. With this, the prophecy of blessed Columba was entirely fulfilled. Within three years one had been utterly destroyed with all his lineage, the other had been forced into becoming a cleric, while the third enlarged his power with possession and mastery of three kingdoms.³⁷⁹

375 Theuderic II died of dysentery at Metz in March 613 (Fredegar IV: 39 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 32), *Passion of Desiderius* 10). Jonas uses similar words for fever in *VC* II: 1, 5, 22, 24.

376 Sigibert had advanced into Champagne to the river Aisne when Chlothar intercepted his army (Fredegar IV: 42, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 34).

377 Fredegar only notes that Chlothar captured three of Theuderic's sons – Sigibert, Corbus, and Merovech. A fourth, Childebart, escaped. Sigibert and Corbus were killed, but Merovech was spared because Chlothar was his godfather. He was sent in secrecy to Neustria where he was placed under the protection of Count Ingobad. Fredegar notes that 'Merovech continued living there for some years' (Fredegar IV: 42, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 35). A Merovech appears later as a monk at Bobbio and it is possible that the two men were the same, as the name would suggest a member of the Merovingian dynasty.

378 Brunhild was arrested at the villa of Orbe and taken to Chlothar at the village of Renève on the river Vingeanne. Chlothar charged her with the death of ten Frankish kings. She was tortured for three days and then led through the ranks of Chlothar's army on a camel. After this, she was tied 'by her hair, one arm and one leg to the tail of an unbroken horse' and torn to pieces. Fredegar IV: 42 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 35) only mentions one horse.

379 Again, Jonas associates the unification of the Merovingian kingdoms under the Neustrian king Chlothar II and his successors with the prophecy of Columbanus.

[I 30] The arrival of Columbanus in Italy. The reception of King Agilulf who grants him the choice of settling in whatever place he chooses. The construction of Bobbio and the death of the blessed man³⁸⁰

When blessed Columbanus had witnessed, as we mentioned above, Theudebert's defeat at the hands of Theuderic, he left Gaul and *Germania* and enters Italy.³⁸¹ There he was honorably received by Agilulf, king of the Lombards.³⁸² Agilulf gave him the choice of settling within Italy wherever he wished. This took place according to God's will.³⁸³ During his stay in Milan Columbanus wanted to attack and cut out the deceits of the heretics, that is, the deceits of the Arians, with the cauterizing blade of the Gospel.³⁸⁴

380 This chapter heading is confined to a small number of manuscripts, and was consigned to the footnotes by Krusch.

381 The Carolingian *Life of Gall* by Wetti reports that two of Columbanus's monks were killed by the locals in the Bregenz area after Columbanus and Gallus had enraged the pagan inhabitants by burning their temples. The inhabitants complained to Duke Gunzo who ruled *Alamannia* under Frankish overlordship, and he withdrew his patronage. According to Wetti (*Life of Gall* 8) this prompted Columbanus to abandon Bregenz for Italy. Columbanus's decision to leave for Italy may also have been due to Theuderic's defeat of Theudebert in 612 which extended his overlordship to *Alamannia*, and it may have been this that prompted Duke Gunzo to withdraw his support for Columbanus and his party.

382 Agilulf was Duke of Turin until he married his predecessor's widow, Theodelinda, and was raised to the kingship in 590. He ruled until 616 with his court in Milan.

383 Jonas again minimizes the role of the king in the foundation process. He does not mention, for example, the royal charter of foundation of 613 by which Agilulf donated the land around Bobbio to a radius of 4 square miles and half a salt well, which the community had to share with Sundrarit, a Lombard warlord, who also held land in the area. Jonas certainly knew of this charter as he was the archivist at Bobbio, and would have been responsible for preserving these documents. Even some clauses in the royal charter appear in Jonas's account here (see Richter, *Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 17–18).

384 Many Lombards espoused heretical Arian Christianity, which followed the theology of Arius (d. 336), who asserted that Jesus Christ was subordinate to God the Father, and thus denied the Trinitarian Christological doctrine, which defines God as three divine persons that are distinct yet equal. On Lombard Arianism, see Fanning, 'Lombard Arianism Reconsidered'; Pohl, 'Deliberate Ambiguity: The Lombards and Christianity'. Agilulf's religious observance is not quite clear. Columbanus terms him a *rex gentilis*, which could be translated as a 'pagan' or 'barbarian' king (*Ep.* V: 14; *SCO*, pp. 52–53). This might not mean that Agilulf was pagan, but could be mere rhetoric intended to make the Lombards more pagan than they actually were, in keeping with papal rhetoric on the Lombards. However, Columbanus seems to imply that Agilulf was pagan, as he notes elsewhere in his letter to Pope Boniface IV that 'he [Agilulf] is said to have remarked, that if he knew for certain, he also would believe' (*Ep.* V: 8; *SCO*, pp. 44–45). Despite this, Agilulf is generally regarded

He wrote an excellent and learned little work against them.³⁸⁵ At that time a man named Jocundus comes to the king and tells him that he knew of a basilica of blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, in the solitude of the Appennine countryside.³⁸⁶ He knew by experience that miracles took place there. It was a bountiful fertile place, with refreshing waters, and an abundance of fish.³⁸⁷ Ancient tradition called it Bobbio on account of the stream with this name that flows in this place and which joins another river called the Trebbia, on the banks of which Hannibal once, while passing the winter there, suffered severe loss of men, horses, and elephants.³⁸⁸

as an Arian: on Agilulf's religion, see Richter, *Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages*, p. 27, with further references. Columbanus's influence at the Lombard court may have been due primarily to Agilulf's Bavarian wife, Theodelinda, who was a Schismatic Catholic in the Three Chapters or Aquileian Schism, a Christological controversy which originated in the Byzantine Empire following the condemnation of the theological writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa by Emperor Justinian I. Columbanus was sympathetic to the cause of the Three Chapters and wrote to Pope Boniface to urge him to resolve this conflict with the Catholics in northern Italy. On the Three Chapters, see Price, trans., *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553*.

385 This work against the Arians no longer exists. Columbanus in his letter to Pope Boniface IV mentions how the rulers in this province (i.e. Lombardy) 'have long trampled on the Catholic faith and consolidated this lapse into Arianism' (*Ep. V: 17; SCO*, pp. 54–57) and mentions a letter he wrote against Agrippinus, perhaps bishop of Como (*Ep. V: 3; SCO*, pp. 40–41). The reason that these works have not survived may be because they exposed Columbanus to the charge of being a Tri-Capitoline schismatic, that is a supporter of the Three Chapters faction.

386 Jocundus may have been a royal agent who was tasked with finding a suitable site for the foundation (Zironi, *Il monastero longobardo di Bobbio*, p. 10). The reference to a basilica denotes an important pre-existing church site, probably a substantial stone structure which may have fallen into disuse (Richter, *Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 17–18).

387 Jonas depicts Bobbio as a *locus amoenus* and as a sacred place that even before Columbanus's arrival was sanctified by miracles. This is in stark contrast to Jonas's other accounts of Columbanus's foundations in Burgundy and Bregenz which were haunted by a pagan presence. On this passage, see Wood, 'Jonas, the Merovingians, and Pope Honorius', pp. 104–05.

388 The battle of the Trebbia was the first major battle of the Second Punic War, waged by the Carthaginians under Hannibal against the Roman Republic in 218 BC. Hannibal devastated the Roman forces on the left bank of the Trebbia near Piacenza. Jonas may here to be drawing on the Roman historian Livy in his *History of Rome* XXI: 58.11, who notes that Hannibal suffered heavy losses while crossing the Apennines, although the expression is not close: as GB notes, Orosius, *Seven Books of Histories* IV: 14, 7–8 (ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 2, p. 47; trans. Fear, p. 184) is more likely to be Jonas's immediate source. The fact that Jonas does not mention that Hannibal won this famous victory against the Romans led Krusch to suggest that this may have been due to a Latin *amor patriae* 'love of his homeland' (Krusch, *Ionae Vitae*, p. 221 n. 6).

When Columbanus came here, finding a half-ruined church he restored it singlemindedly and returned it to its former glory. In this restoration the wonderful power of the Lord is shown. For, when they were cutting fir trees amongst the craggy rocks in the heart of the forest in out-of-the-way places, the trunks which had been cut elsewhere and those cut there, which fell inconveniently, blocked the access for carts. There was one trunk of incredible size which thirty or forty men could scarcely carry on level ground. The man of God coming to it with two or three [men], as the path of the hard track allowed, placed the immense weight of the trunk on his back and on those of his companions. And, whereas before they could scarcely advance with ease because of the difficulty of the way, they soon quickly walked with the burden of the oppressing trunks so that, counter-intuitively, those bearing loads went rejoicing on their way (as if the trunks were being carried by others) with steady steps and with all the ease of rambles. The man of God seeing that he was receiving such great assistance, urges his companions joyfully to complete the work they had begun and, having received reassurance, to determine to remain in that desert. He affirms that this is God's will. And so he restores the gable roof of the temple, and the ruined walls, and he begins to build what else is needed for the monastery.

Meanwhile the aforementioned Chlothar, seeing how the prophecy of the man of God had been fulfilled in himself, orders the venerable man Eustasius, who was ruling the monastery of Luxeuil in Columbanus's stead,³⁸⁹ to come to him. Chlothar piously asked him to undertake an official mission using public resources.³⁹⁰ He was to take with him noble men, companions of his own choosing, who would act as sureties for the king's good faith.³⁹¹ They were to go after blessed Columbanus, find him

389 Eustasius must have returned to Luxeuil at some point, as he had joined Columbanus in *Germania*. Columbanus may have wanted Eustasius to return to Luxeuil, and may have appointed him abbot. The later *Lives of Gall* noted that Columbanus's Irish companion, Gallus, was offered the abbacy of Luxeuil after Columbanus's death but declined the honour. Given the tensions latent in the Luxeuil community before and after Columbanus's banishment, the choice of Gallus as abbot seems highly unlikely.

390 The phrase *supplimentum publicum* ('public resources') seems to be unique to Jonas, who uses it again (*VC* II: 23). It may suggest something like the continuation of the Roman *cursus publicus*, the state-run courier and transportation service of the Roman Empire, but might equally be very much less official.

391 The phrase *sui vademonii arbitres* ('sureties for the king's good faith') is not clear, but would seem to suggest that Chlothar was determined to make his offer seem as genuine as could be.

wherever he was, and urge him as eloquently as they could to return to the king. The venerable disciple then set out, following in the footsteps of his master. When he had come to him, he conveyed Chlothar's message. Seeing Eustasius again, blessed Columba was overjoyed and thanks him for the delivery of the gift he had received, and having kept him with him for some time, urged him to remember his own duty, to instruct the group of brothers according to the norms of the regular discipline, to unite the people of Christ into a community of many,³⁹² and to educate them in his teachings. Then, Columbanus sends Eustasius back, ordering him to return to Chlothar, and commands him to appease the king's ears with a response like this: under no circumstances would he consider returning; he asked the king only this, to maintain his companions who were living in Luxeuil with royal support and protection. Columbanus also wrote a letter to the king full of reprimanding remarks.³⁹³ The king received with joy this most pleasing gift as though it was a pledge of his alliance with the man of God, and he did not forget to honour his petition. He takes care to give the monastery his protection, he enriches it with annual revenues, increases its boundaries in all directions, according to the wish of venerable Eustasius, and, out of love for the man of God, he provides support to all those living in that place.³⁹⁴

After a year, blessed Columbanus completed his blessed life in the monastery of Bobbio. On 23 November, he gave back his soul to Heaven freed from its body.³⁹⁵ If anyone wishes to know something of his energetic zeal, he may find it in his writings.³⁹⁶ His relics are preserved in this place

392 The term used is *collegium*. The same term is used by Bishop Desiderius of Cahors, Jonas's exact contemporary, in *Ep.* I: 10, to Dado, to describe the group of friends at Chlothar's court, where he had been educated and which were influenced by Columbanian ideals.

393 This letter has not survived. Columbanus may have been critical of the vindictiveness with which Chlothar had killed his enemies (Brunhild and Theuderic's children) or of reports about his licentiousness (see Fredegar IV: 42, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 34–36).

394 For Chlothar's privilege for Luxeuil, see Wood, 'Jonas, the Merovingians, and Pope Honorius'.

395 As Columbanus was in the habit of retreating to a hermitage for Sundays and holy days he may have died at his remote hermitage near Coli. This might explain Jonas's laconic account of Columbanus's death.

396 Jonas would have been responsible for preserving Columbanus's writings as archivist. His recommendation to the reader echoes the advice of Gregory the Great in *Dialogues* II: 36 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 107) on Benedict: 'He wrote a Rule for Monks that is remarkable for its discretion and its clarity of language. Anyone who wishes to know more about his life and character can discover in his Rule exactly what he was like as abbot, for his life could not have differed from his teaching.' Jonas's subtle and unacknowledged use of the *Dialogues*,

where they are powerful in working miracles under the aegis of Christ.³⁹⁷
To Him be glory for ever and ever, world without end. Amen.

VERSES AND HYMN

Verses³⁹⁸ to be sung at table³⁹⁹ on Columbanus's feast day⁴⁰⁰
Priest, sustained by bountiful grace, you are praised brightly
By your own, you, Columba, who waft glory over all the earth.⁴⁰¹
The cohorts of monks will call you their illustrious father.
Nobles call you a wise man; kings, a prophet.
Your teachings, adorned by your deeds, confirm it:⁴⁰²
The sacred model of your religious way of life bestows splendour.
So, glory of virtues, soldier of Christ, for all time
You are held (to be) ornamented, unfolding your teachings in sacred
speech.⁴⁰³

particularly Books Two and Four, is discussed by de Vogüé, 'La mort dans les monastères: Jonas de Bobbio et les Dialogues de Grégoire le Grand'.

397 The same phrase (*presole Christo*) is used in the Edict of Chlothar II from 614 (noted by de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 168 n. 13). It is notable that Jonas provides no detail of Columbanus's posthumous miracles, perhaps to discourage the development of a cult.

398 The two hymns – Jonas calls the first *versus* ('verses') and the second *hymnum* ('hymn') – that conclude Book One of *VC* differ considerably from the poem with which it opens. It would appear that Jonas is the author of the hymns, whereas he clearly did not compose the earlier verses. Rand, 'The Irish Flavour of *Hisperica Famina*', p. 135, regarded the hymns as justification for calling Jonas a poet. The form used (which mostly has spondaic endings, – –) presumably reflects the fact that they are to be sung. The heading of the second hymn suggests that these verses were an addition to the *VC*, and that they were separately composed.

399 *Ad mensam* literally means at table. This hymn, *Versus in eius festivitate ad mensam canendi*, was intended for singing by the community in the refectory.

400 Evidence that the community marked the anniversary of Columbanus's death as a feast. Jonas's hymn is modelled on that of Columbanus's *De mundi transitu*. See de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 169 n. 1; D. Schaller, "'De mundi transitu': A Rhythmical Poem by Columbanus?", pp. 244–45.

401 We have followed GC and GB in interpreting these opening lines.

402 *Praecepta* is probably a reference to Columbanus's Rules. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, renders the line: 'Illustrés par tes œuvres, tes préceptes le confirment'.

403 This is an awkward line. We have translated 'comptus' as 'ornamented'. De Vogüé's 'En tenue de parade à jamais, quand tu profères tes préceptes par des discours sacrés' suggests that he too had difficulty in understanding the meaning of the line.

Among precious metals which are comparable to your words?⁴⁰⁴
 Or do the deeds of antiquity compare to holy acts?
 The golden head of the Persians, Babylon,⁴⁰⁵
 (And) the silver Darius the ancient Mede had nothing (comparable),
 Nor the bronze Macedonian, who once made his mark on war,⁴⁰⁶
 Or the Egyptians and Chenchres submerged by the sea,⁴⁰⁷
 They did nothing of similar worth in their deeds,
 Smyranean Homer and Mantuan Maro,⁴⁰⁸
 Not Carthaginian Hannibal, nor the swift Indian, Porus,⁴⁰⁹
 Not Marius, Catulus, Scipio, Sulla, Gracchus;
 Not iron Caesar,⁴¹⁰ Bocchus the Numidian,⁴¹¹ nor the Ambronian,⁴¹²

404 We have followed GC's suggestion that the word *dignis* might be emended to *dictis* ('words'), since *factis* ('deeds') comes in the next line, and words/deeds are a standard contrast. Krusch's version can be translated, 'Among precious metals, which are equal to you?'

405 The Ages of Gold, Silver, Bronze, Iron, and Clay signifying the decline in the world. Cf. Basina's dream in Fredegar III: 12 on Merovingian kings as lions, etc. reflecting a similar view of decline; Daniel 2:32–40. See Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel* 3 for the Medes and Persians. See de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 169 n. 5.

406 A reference to Alexander.

407 The Latin is 'Nilicola et Cincris', which has led to some confusion. The oldest manuscript, St Gallen 553, fol. 115, has *salonilicola et cincrus*. Krusch has used a better reading. De Vogüé translated it as 'Ou le riverain du Nil et Cenchris noyés dans la mer'. Nilicola refers to the inhabitants of the Nile, i.e. the Egyptians, and Chenchres is the name given to the Pharaoh who chased the Israelites into the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus. Jonas may have relied on Gregory of Tours's *Histories* where he mentions the Nile 'unde Niliculae appellantur' (I: 10: trans. Thorpe, pp. 74–76) and on Eusebius's *Chronicle* where Chenchres is named as the Pharaoh who perished in the Red Sea with his army.

408 Homer was alleged to have come from Smyrna in Asia Minor. Mantuan Maro refers to Virgil who was born in Mantua.

409 Jonas may have known Quintus Curtius Rufus, *Life of Alexander* 8, 14, 38, where reference is made to the *pertinacia Pori*: de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*. p. 169 n. 7: however, as GC notes, *pernix* means 'swift' rather than 'persistent'. Porus was an Indian prince who resisted Alexander the Great's invasion of the Punjab. Although he was defeated, he impressed Alexander, and was left in possession of his kingdom.

410 *Ferreus* picks up on the earlier references to metal: golden Babylon, silver Darius, bronze Alexander.

411 Bocchus (I) king of Mauretania was father-in-law of Jugurtha: his history is covered in Sallust's *Jugurthine War*: however, although the *War with Cataline* was known and cited by Gregory of Tours and Fredegar, the *Jugurthine War* may not have been known in Merovingian Francia. It is more probable that Jonas was drawing on Orosius, *Histories* V: 15.

412 Having provided a list of notable figures from the distant past, Jonas now provides a list of peoples derived, it would seem, from some classical geographer, as yet unidentified: this

Celtiberian,⁴¹³ Scythian, Iberian,⁴¹⁴ and Sicambrian.⁴¹⁵
 Fruitful as the cedar and the palm tree, you bear fruit.⁴¹⁶
 You are pleasing as the fine gold of Thessaly⁴¹⁷
 You smell like the beloved frankincense trees of Sheba,⁴¹⁸
 You give off balsam like the cut branch of Engaddi.⁴¹⁹
 You, the vine-shoot remain in the true vine,⁴²⁰
 And, rich like the olive tree, you pour out oil.
 You are strong in gentleness, renowned in kindness.
 Through investigating mysteries and penetrating hidden secrets

he follows with a list of precious stones drawn from Revelation. For geographical knowledge in the centuries before Jonas, see Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*; more generally, see Lozovsky, *'The Earth is Our Book': Geographical Knowledge in the Latin West c.400–1000*. Jonas's intention would seem to be to set Columbanus against the widest possible range of comparison. The *Ambrones* appear in Roman sources of the second century BC, when they are to be found between the mouth of the Rhine and the Jutlandic peninsula.

413 The Celtiberians were to be found in northern Spain. Roman authors saw them as being composed of a mixture of Celtic and Iberian peoples.

414 The Latin is *Hiberus*, which might be read as either Iberian or Hibernian. Curiously, there was a myth, recounted in the *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, that the Irish were of Spanish origin: there may be a reflection of that here.

415 The *Sicambri* were a people of the lower Rhine, one of the tribes that became the Frankish confederation. The term is used by Gregory of Tours, *Histories* II: 31 (trans. Thorpe, p. 144), where he appears to be quoting a sermon of Remigius of Rheims.

416 Cf. Psalms 91:13: 'The just shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow up like the cedar of Lebanon.'

417 Krusch has 'Aetaliae thesaurus', which is to be found in most of the manuscripts as the isle of Elba. In support of the reading he points to Pliny, *Natural History* III: 81, *Ilva cum ferri metallis ... a Graecis Aethalia dicta*: 'Elba with its iron ... is called Aethalia by the Greeks'. The Metz manuscript, however, gives 'Thessaliae thesaurus', which is the reading preferred by de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 170 n. 11. Given the contrast between the simple West and the exotic East, Thessaly seems a stronger point of comparison than Elba.

418 Virgil, *Georgics* II: 117. Already, at the end of the Prologue, Jonas has made comparison with the aromas of Arabia, and also the balsam of Engaddi. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 170 n. 12.

419 Engaddi (Ein Gedi) was already known to Pliny as a centre for gathering Balsam. Jonas has already mentioned it at the end of the Prologue. As ML suggests, Jonas probably had in mind Song of Songs 1:13: *botrus cypri dilectus meus mihi in vineis Engaddi* ('A cluster of cypress my love is to me, in the vineyards of Engaddi'). If so, a copyist has probably written *virgas* ('branches') for *vineas* ('vines').

420 Cf. John 15:1–5. We have translated *palmitis opaga* as 'vine-shoot'. As ML notes, the quotation from John (*Ego sum vitis vera et Pater meus agricola est. Omnem palmitem in me non ferentem fructum tollet eum*: 'I am the true vine; and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me, that beareth not fruit, he will take away') may imply that *opaga* (*opaca* = dark) is a mistake for *agricola*.

You have built a house set upon rock,⁴²¹
 Which has supported the entire mass of created things.
 And someone placed on top of this rock remains steadfast for ever.⁴²²
 This is the corner stone,⁴²³ chrysoprase,⁴²⁴ jacinth,
 Sardonyx, emerald, topaz, beryl,
 Chrysolith and jasper, sapphire, amethyst,
 Chalcedony and sard, a white pearl
 Placed in the foundation of the Lord's Jerusalem.⁴²⁵
 You are alive having died, while you purchase life with death;
 You lose what is to be condemned, while you experience the penalties of
 the flesh.
 You are free from that which has to be suffered, while you carry the cross
 of Christ.
 While you flee your homeland, you return to your homeland.
 You are united with the Eternal King, while you scorn (earthly) kings;⁴²⁶
 You enter into the delightful places of Paradise for ever,
 And going to possess those joyful (places)⁴²⁷ in green pastures,⁴²⁸
 (You) whom the Lord, the lover of virtues, has crowned,

421 Matthew 7:24.

422 Alluding to Christ. Matthew 7:24; 1 Peter 1:25. Jonas here uses *in eva* ('for ever') (plural) for *in aevum*: in fact, he seems to use the singular and plural of *(a)evum/(a)eva* interchangeably.

423 See 1 Peter 2:6.

424 A green variety of chalcedony. There follows a list of gem stones, which echo the description in Revelation 21:18–21: '(18) The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. (19) The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald (20) the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. (21) The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.' Cf. Ephesians 2:20 ('built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone'); 1 Peter 2:6 ('See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame'). Jacinth is a red variety of zircon; sardonyx is a red variant of onyx; beryl may be colourless: but it is also to be found in a variety of colours; chalcedony is a form of quartz, and occurs in various colours; sard, otherwise known as carnelian or cornelian, is reddish brown.

425 Revelation 21:18–21.

426 ML suggests reading *regis* as *reges*.

427 ML suggests that *laeta* ('joyful') must refer to the *amoena* ('delightful places') of the previous line.

428 Psalms 23:1.

And has placed you in his eternal dwellings.
 There you will sing joyful songs with a holy voice.
 Now you take hold of the treasures, which you have long hoarded,
 Which you traded through pious commerce in the world.
 You behold the choirs of angels and prophets,
 The throngs of white-toga'd⁴²⁹ martyrs and of the just.
 Bathed in a golden light,⁴³⁰ you shine brightly in these camps,
 To which your guide, Christ, has welcomed you, having killed the
 enemy with a dagger.⁴³¹
 You found the Lord Jesus, whom here you sought,
 And so he gives the trophy to the one triumphing over the world.
 You follow the way that you had formerly prepared,
 Which leads to the eternal joys of Paradise.
 You spurned the world so that you might gain the Messiah,
 With whom you remain through all ages without future end.
 Glory be to the Trinity, whose power ought always to be sung,
 Present for now and forever.

I have provided a hymn, which you may order to be sung on the feast of his death, because the first hymn, which I have recently sent to you, does not contain his miracles.⁴³²

1. Solemn in our times
 Shines the glorious day

429 'Candidatus': de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 171 n. 18 suggested a parallel between *Martyrum candidatum catervas* ('the throngs of white-toga'd martyrs') and the line in the *Te Deum*, *Martyrum candidatus ... exercitus*: 'the noble army of martyrs' (literally 'the white toga'd army of martyrs').

430 The phrase *luce fulva* recurs in *VC* II: 11, 23, 25. Cf. Prudentius, *Liber Cathemerinon* 9, 76.

431 'Sica': Jonas uses the phrase 'micantem sicam' in his description of Columbanus's early learning, *VC* I: 3.

432 This statement, which is to be found in Turin F IV 12 from the end of the tenth century, has interesting implications for the construction of the text, since it implies that the hymns are additions, sent on two separate occasions, and presumably provided by Jonas himself, which have been inserted at the end of Book One of the *VC*. The Metz manuscript merely has: *Item hymnus sancti Columbani*. It is worth remembering that Jonas includes no posthumous miracles in the *VC*.

On which holy Columba⁴³³

Ascends to heaven, bearing the trophies [of victory].

2. But before she will have delivered⁴³⁴ him

Into the air of day, his mother⁴³⁵

Sees the sun from her womb

Pour out light on the earth.

3. After he has grown up in Ireland⁴³⁶

Having been instructed in sacred teaching,

Visiting the land of Gaul⁴³⁷

He brings salvation to the people.

4. The sick are quickly healed.⁴³⁸

He produces water from rock.⁴³⁹

A fish is provided for his use.⁴⁴⁰

Rain is diverted from the harvest.⁴⁴¹

5. A barren woman has a child,⁴⁴²

A bird returns its plunder,⁴⁴³

Grain increases in the barn,⁴⁴⁴

Cut flesh is healed.⁴⁴⁵

6. Touched, he sees without being seen.⁴⁴⁶

The prison feels losses,⁴⁴⁷

433 The first time that Jonas designates Columbanus as a saint (*sacer*) whereas before his death he was a holy man (*vir Dei*).

434 We have translated *ederit* as a future perfect tense, although it could be perfect. The other verbs in the hymn are in the present.

435 See *VC I*: 2.

436 *VC I*: 3.

437 *VC I*: 5.

438 *VC I*: 7.

439 *VC I*: 9.

440 *VC I*: 11.

441 *VC I*: 13.

442 *VC I*: 14.

443 *VC I*: 15.

444 *VC I*: 17.

445 *VC I*: 15.

446 *VC I*: 20.

447 *VC I*: 19.

The pestilence flees from a man⁴⁴⁸
Which a cruel demon had sent.

7. The Loire holds back the skiff,⁴⁴⁹
The stolen objects reappear,
A blind man receives his sight,⁴⁵⁰
Food is increased by gift.⁴⁵¹

8. Birds come to offer themselves as food,⁴⁵²
Wild beasts are obedient to commands,
A conscious faith knows that everything
Which it asks for will be accomplished.

9. Glory to you, O Lord.
Glory to the Only Begotten,
Together with the Holy Spirit,
Throughout all ages.⁴⁵³

HERE HAPPILY ENDS THE FIRST BOOK

448 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 172 sees this as a parallel to I. 20–21, and, given the order of the narrative, this must be correct. The language, however, is allegorical.

449 VC I: 22.

450 VC I: 21.

451 VC I: 22.

452 VC I: 27.

453 Following Alain Dubreucq's suggestion we have adopted the reading of the Metz manuscript (*Gloria tibi, Domine, Gloria Unigenito, Una cum Sancto Spiritu, In sempiterna saecula*) in place of Krusch's preferred reading, which he took from the tenth- and eleventh-century B 1b class of manuscripts that come from Bobbio (there being no doxology in Krusch's favoured St Gallen manuscript): *Gloria tibi Trinitas, Aequalis una deitas, Et ante omnia saecula, Et nunc et in perpetuum* ('Glory to You, O Trinity, One God co-equal, That was before all ages, And is now and will be forever'). As Dubreucq notes, the reading in the Metz is very close to a doxology to be found three times in the Antiphonary of Bangor (585, 588–89), a manuscript which has an early association with Bobbio (Richter, *Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages*, p. 150 n. 56), and thus represents traditions with which Jonas could have been familiar. Krusch, of course, did not know the Metz manuscript. See, however, de Vogüé, 'En lisant', pp. 88–89.

BOOK TWO

HERE BEGIN THE CHAPTERS OF BOOK II

[1] The manner of life and election of Abbot Athala and the punishment of the wicked

[2] The retreat of the river through divine power

[3] The thumb that was cut off and healed by the man of God's prayer

[4] The sick person healed at Milan

[5] The prophesy of [Athala's] death

[6] The heavens open, divine consolation, and [Athala's] death

[7] The rule of Eustasius, the restoration of a girl's sight and bodily health, and her entry into a religious way of life⁴⁵⁴

[8] The healing of another girl's sight and the increase⁴⁵⁵ of those converted to the religious life

[9] The opposition of Agrestius and his refutation

[10] The punishment of the followers of Agrestius, his violent death and the death of Eustasius⁴⁵⁶

[11] The monastery of Faremoutiers [*Eboriacus*], the death of Sisetrudis, and the angelic singing

[12] The religious way of life of Gibitrudis and the manner of her death

[13] The life and death of Ercantrudis

[14] The death of Augnofledis and the angelic singing

[15] The young girl Deurechilda and her death

454 *Conversatio* might mean either 'way of life' or 'monastic life': the narrative deals with her entry into the monastic life.

455 *Profectus* might mean 'progress' or 'increase': either would be appropriate for the chapter, but since it ends with the conversion of many to religion 'increase' would seem to fit better.

456 Jonas distinguishes between the *interitus* of Agrestius and the *obitus* of Eustasius.

[16] Domma and the two young girls, and the beam of light seen shining in her mouth

[17] Wilsindana,⁴⁵⁷ her prophecy, and the angelic singing

[18] Leudebertana⁴⁵⁸ and her vision of the apostle Peter

[19] The punishment of the wrongdoers and the damnation of the fugitives

[20] The death of Landeberga and the angelic singing

[21] The overflow of oil and the transformation of water

[22] The beast seen in the transgression of dietary rules

[23] The Life of Abbot Bertulf

[24] The avenging of the monk⁴⁵⁹ against the Arians⁴⁶⁰

[25] The monk Meroveus, the vengeance taken for him, and the death of the monk Agibodus and of Theudoald, Baudacharius and Leubardus

[II 1] The manner of life and election of Abbot Athala and the punishment of the wicked

When the venerable Columba had passed from this world, Athala was chosen in his place, a man praiseworthy for his absolute piety and whose notable virtues shone out in imitation of his master. He was of Burgundian origin, and though noble by birth⁴⁶¹ he was yet more noble in holiness, as he followed in the footsteps of the master. However, we should not pass over how his initial training in his earliest youth led to mature success. He had

457 The manuscripts vary between Wilsinda and Wilsindana: as Wolfgang Haubrichs explains, the former is the Germanic name, the latter a Romance form ('romanische Obliquus-Form').

458 The manuscripts vary between Leudeberta and Leudebertana: as Wolfgang Haubrichs explains, the former is the Germanic name, the latter a Romance form.

459 The meaning of *ultio* varies in Jonas: in *VC* II: 1 and 10 it means 'punishment', but here and in II: 25 it implies vengeance.

460 The relationship between the Latin here and the chapter itself is awkward: literally the title means 'the vengeance of the monk by the Arians' or perhaps 'the vengeance for the monk against the Arians', which comes closer to the appropriate meaning. For the sake of elegance, we offer a rather free translation.

461 The word used is *natio*, which, although it can mean 'race', we have rendered here as 'birth'.

been imbued with a liberal education⁴⁶² by his noble father, who afterwards entrusted him to a certain bishop Arigius.⁴⁶³ But when he discerned that no profit was coming of this, his uncultivated feeling began to yearn for greater things. He decided to set aside worldly vanities in order to join a group of monks.⁴⁶⁴ Therefore he secretly left his companions, and content with only two servants⁴⁶⁵ he came to the monastery of Lérins.⁴⁶⁶ Living there for some time, when he had seen how the others would not submit their necks to the reins⁴⁶⁷ of a monastic rule,⁴⁶⁸ he began to consider anxiously where the provision of stronger counsel might clear a path.⁴⁶⁹ And so he left the place and came as far as Luxeuil, to the blessed Columbanus. When the holy man saw that he was shrewd and naturally intelligent, he took him into his personal service and tried to instruct him in every divine command.⁴⁷⁰

462 Although Athala seems to have received his education at home, and not in a 'school', the implications of *liberalibus litteris imbutus* are that the education itself was a traditional late-Roman one. The phrase, however, is also used of Columbanus (*VC* I: 3).

463 The same Arigius, bishop of Lyon, was the principal bishop opposed to Columbanus. It was to him that Columbanus sent his treatise on Easter (*Ep.* II: 6; *SCO*, pp. 16–17). The comment, and the fact that Athala did not benefit from the instruction, but thrived under that of Columbanus, becoming his closest disciple, are clearly criticisms of the bishop. Arigius seems, however, to have been intellectually impressive, and to have played a significant role in the collection of canon law: Stancliffe, 'Columbanus and the Gallic Bishops', p. 211.

464 The same military term, *cohors*, which we have translated as 'group', is used frequently by Jonas (see *VC* I: 10, n. 146), but not, *pace* de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 177 n. 3, for Columbanus's entry into Bangor (*VC* I: 4). As GB notes, the use of the term is common in ascetic and martyrial literature, from Cyprian onwards.

465 That he was able to take two servants with him is proof of Athala's social status, and a reflection of his noble background already alluded to by Jonas. The young Caesarius took only one servant with him to Lérins. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 177 n. 4, draws attention to the parallel in *Life of Caesarius* I: 5 (trans. Klingshirn, pp. 11–12).

466 Lérins had been founded by Honoratus in the early fifth century, and dominated Gallic monasticism for over a hundred years. It is usually regarded as having been in decline by 600, although that is not what is implied by the writings of Dynamius of Marseille. See Dumézil, 'Le patrice Dynamius et son réseau' and Dubreucq, 'Lérins et la Bourgondie dans le haut Moyen Âge'.

467 'Yoke' would be the more normal English expression.

468 *Regularis disciplinae*: in *VC* I: 4, 19, 30 we have translated the same expression as 'regular discipline'.

469 Again, Jonas implies the pre-eminence of Columbanus's teachings and monasticism, over both the ecclesiastical culture of bishop Arigius and the older Gallic monasticism of Lérins. He does admit the past virtues of Lérins, however, in the *VJ*.

470 When he and his Insular disciples were exiled from Burgundy in 610, Columbanus appointed Athala as prior of Luxeuil: *Ep.* IV (*SCO*, pp. 26–37). The events that follow seem to date to Athala's time as prior, before his move to Bobbio, c.614.

So, when he was ruling the aforesaid monastery with distinction in succession to blessed Columbanus, and was instructing it in every discipline associated with life under a rule, the cunning of the Ancient Serpent began to spread the deadly virus of discord with harmful blows, exciting against him the hearts of some of his subordinates, who said that they could not bear his precepts of excessive fervour, and that they were unable to sustain the weight of the harsh discipline. But Athala, being of wise mind, was anxious to provide holy poultices and to give a draught of a health-giving antidote by which the putrefied scab might be removed, and thus he sought to soften their arrogant hearts. Unable to keep with him those he had long reprimanded, he, disturbed by the sorrow of his mind, pursued them with many prayers and with pious concern,⁴⁷¹ so that they would not leave him nor deviate from the route of the arduous path, and that they might remember that the fathers attained the kingdoms of heaven⁴⁷² through mortification and contempt for the present life. When he realized that it was of no use and saw that those souls who were turning elsewhere could not be held back by the reins of his community, he permits the obstinate ones to leave. After they had left him some were drowned,⁴⁷³ while others sought the wilderness in order to achieve their liberty.⁴⁷⁴ Having set themselves up in these places they soon received punishment for their wilful temerity and arrogance. For while they were staying in these places and were slandering the man of God, one of them called Roccolenus, who was believed to have stoked up the quarrel, was suddenly burnt up with a blazing attack of fever.⁴⁷⁵ He began to cry out from the fires of his punishment that he wished, if he could, to go to blessed Athala, and to assuage the evils of the crime which had been committed with the medicine of penance. Hardly had he said this when suddenly he fell silent and breathed his last. But many of those who were present, seeing the injuries to the man of God avenged by divine vengeance,

471 *Cum pietatis obsequio*. The semantic range of *pietas* includes 'kindness' and 'piety'.

472 As GB notes, the plural 'kingdoms of the heavens', *regna caelorum*, is to be found in most Church Fathers, especially Jerome.

473 As ML points out, the Latin literally means 'some were received by the embrace of the sea', which is presumably a euphemism for drowning, as in the subsequent fate of Theutharius, which follows at the end of the chapter. The phrase *marinis ... sinibus* has a parallel in Grattius, *Cynegetica* 39, *labitur inque sinus magno venit ore marinos* ('it slips and reaches the gulf of the sea in its mighty mouth').

474 They became hermits. What seems to have been at issue was permission to live the eremitical life.

475 Another Ruccolenus appears in Gregory of Tours, *DLH* V: 1, 4 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 255, 258–59), and Gregory of Tours, *LVM* II: 26 (trans. Van Dam, p. 242).

return to the man of God and confess their sins; they promise that if they are taken back they would emend themselves in every way. The holy man received them with great joy as if they had been sheep snatched from the jaws of wolves, and he restored those who acknowledged their faults to their places. But those who, stained with the vice of arrogance, and prevented by shame or rashness, refused to return, and who despised the opportunity of repentance, were subjected to a variety of different deaths, so that it became clear that they had been the companions of him (whom divine vengeance had struck) in inciting the growth in disobedience, since they did not merit pardon with the rest. For one of them, called Theudemund, was killed by the blow of an axe. The legs of another were caught in nets while crossing the bed of a small stream, and he was killed by the little waves of the river. A third, who was called Theutharius, was drowned, when he thought that he would float on the sea in his little boat. Those who still remained, seeing these things, having overcome their shame, followed their companions back to the blessed Athala. They were welcomed back and saved by him as the others had been before.

[II 2] The retreat of the river through divine power

Another miracle performed by him is attested⁴⁷⁶ by all the brothers in the aforesaid monastery, including myself, for I had been assigned to the service of the holy man.⁴⁷⁷ When at one time the stream, the Bobbio, which we have already mentioned, was in spate,⁴⁷⁸ flowing violently and destructively, as is the case with torrents falling from the summits of the Alps when raised by rainfall, so this one gathered piles of stones and heaps of wood as it swelled with excessive strength. It strove to undermine the mill of the monastery with its fast current, and to submerge the whole workshop by battering against it. Hearing the crash, the guardian of the mill, who was called Agibodus, went to the mill to see whether the force of the battering would cause damage there.⁴⁷⁹ When he arrived there he

476 Here, as elsewhere in Jonas, a neuter plural (*miracula*) is treated as a feminine singular. See Grandgent, *An Introduction to Vulgar Latin*, p. 147.

477 The first of a number of occasions when Jonas himself is a witness.

478 Literally, 'with swollen masses of water'. See *VC* I: 30, above.

479 Agibodus appears again in *VC* II: 25. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 180 n. 4 draws attention to another monk in charge of a mill, Sabinian, in *Life of the Jura Fathers*, I: 17 (52) (trans. Vivian, pp. 126–27), whose virtues are remarkably similar to those of Agibodus. See also Gregory of Tours, *LVP* XVIII: 2 (trans. James, pp. 122–23).

saw that, unless the brothers were to arrive with instant assistance, the mill would be destroyed. He thought that the father should be told quickly, so that he [Athala], who with appropriate energy might free the mill from the surge of waters, might provide relief. The man of God told him: 'Go and get me the deacon Sinoald. You, however, go to your bed and get some sleep. Do not be afraid or give your heart over to grief.' It was morning, before the dawn poured out its pleasant light on the earth.⁴⁸⁰ Sinoald came to the man of God and blessed Athala said to him: 'Take the staff which I lean on,⁴⁸¹ go to the Bobbio and declare in the voice of one commanding, having made the sign of the Lord's cross,⁴⁸² that it [the river] should cease to break through the banks and to flood them with presumptuous boldness.⁴⁸³ But, withdrawing to other channels, let it leave these undamaged, and know that it is to recede through the Lord's commands.' The aforesaid man [Sinoald], obeying the command of the man of God, set off armed with faith. He planted the staff in the bank and commanded the stream to move from that place by the orders of the man of God, and through divine power and with violent effort to withdraw to the other side of the hill. And soon, the obedient river, its course abandoned, withdrawing from the gently graded⁴⁸⁴ side of the hill, held back the waters over the hard flanks of the hill like a caged bird,⁴⁸⁵ until the cavities of a stream-bed lay open, down which they [the waters] might flow, with their liquid confined. And now with dawn breaking, so that it poured its light on the world, Sinoald arose and thought to himself: 'I shall go and see if the raging waters obeyed the man of God.'⁴⁸⁶ He came to the bank of the river-bed, and, seeing it empty, he observed⁴⁸⁷

480 *Aurora funderet grata lumina terris*: perhaps a reminiscence (albeit only a vague one) of Virgil, *Aeneid* IV, l. 584: [*Aurora*] ... *novo spargebat lumine terras* ('Dawn sprinkled the lands with new light').

481 Elijah gives the same order to Gehezi in 2 Kings 4:29. See de Vogüé, *Vie de Coloman*, p. 180 n. 6.

482 De Vogüé, *Vie de Coloman*, p. 181 n. 8 sees a parallel with Eugippius, *Life of Severinus* 15.

483 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* III: 10 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 125).

484 We have adopted GB's suggestion of emending Krusch's *fluenta* to *fluentia*.

485 We have followed ML, who notes that *alis* ('bird') here is a spelling of *ales*, and is in the nominative.

486 Following ML, we have translated *oboederint*, which appears in the MSS, rather than Krusch's emendation of *oboedire*.

487 We have followed GB's suggestion, and adopted the manuscript reading of *spectabat* ('observed'): in any case, *expecto* is not infrequently used for *specto* in Late Antique Latin.

that it had moved to the slopes of another hill, which had opened up a channel for it, down which it flowed. He hastened to the man of God and announced the triumph of the victory that had been achieved. The man of God said to him: 'Never presume to tell this to anyone during my lifetime',⁴⁸⁸ doubtless so that the praise of sycophants might not stain a heart full of virtues.⁴⁸⁹ This vice, although men may be endowed with many different virtues, is to be carefully avoided by all holy men. For the cunning enemy wickedly strives in order that, while he cannot dishonour a holy man of God in greater and obvious sins, he may at least pollute him in obscure things⁴⁹⁰ which seem of little importance.⁴⁹¹

[II 3] The thumb that was cut off and healed by the man of God's prayer⁴⁹²

It then happened, when at a certain time one of the monks called Fraimer was turning the earth with a plough in preparation for sowing, the roughness of the hard soil suddenly cracks and shatters the rigidity of the plough-board.⁴⁹³ When the brother tries to fix it, he suddenly cuts off the thumb of his left hand with an accidental⁴⁹⁴ stroke of the plough-share. He buries his thumb in the ground, and having put earth over it as if he were giving it a burial, having left the plough, he goes to the monastery where, prostrated on the ground, he makes confession to the father.⁴⁹⁵ On seeing this, the man of God said: 'Where is the part of the thumb which was

488 Cf. Matthew 17.9; also, Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* I: 9 (trans. Zimmerman, pp. 35–36).

489 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 181 n. 10 notes the parallels with other comments by Jonas, *VC*, *Ep.* to Waldebert and Bobolenus, I: 3; II: 4, 6, 10, 21, 23, 25. As ML notes, we have translated (singular) *macularet*, as in the manuscripts, rather than Krusch's choice of (plural) *macularent*, to follow the singular noun *favor*.

490 ML suggests that this should be understood as 'in hidden respects'.

491 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 181 n. 11 draws a parallel with Gregory of Tours, *LVP* XV: 1 (trans. James, pp. 104–05).

492 In fact, Jonas does not ascribe the miracle to prayer.

493 Literally, 'the firmness of the stock' (*stiphae firmitatem*). As ML points out, *stiphae* derives from *stips*, which would in classical Latin be a masculine noun, with its genitive *stipitis*: it appears to have changed gender to *stipa*. We follow ML, understanding this as the plough-board, and the *ferramentum* as the plough-share.

494 Literally, 'unexpected'.

495 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 182 n. 3 lists references to confession and prostration in Columbanus, *Communal Rule* I: 1; III: 2 (*SCO*, pp. 144–48), as well as parallels in *Rule of Benedict*, 46, 1–3 and Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* II: 6 (trans. Zimmerman, pp. 68–69).

cut off?', and he tells him that he has buried it in the ground in a furrow. 'You did wrong', Athala says, 'why did you not bring it to me? So hurry, telling no one the reason, and having retrieved it, bring it here.' Therefore, having set out, Fraimer hurries and brings back the remains of his thumb as he has been commanded. The distance was about a [Roman] mile, with the path winding its way over the flank of the steep mountain and along the course of the river Trebbia. Then the man of God, taking the severed thumb,⁴⁹⁶ joined it to the hand, smearing it with his saliva,⁴⁹⁷ and the thumb, having been attached to the flesh with this glue, stuck as it had done before. Athala ordered him to go and to keep silent about this. Oh what wonderful power of the Almighty, that he should thus glorify his followers on earth, as he restores cold and severed limbs to their former beauty through their intervention!

[II 4] The sick person healed at Milan

One time when this same man [Athala] had come to Milan, there was a small boy who was in the last stages of a severe fever and was but awaiting the end of his life. His parents, having heard⁴⁹⁸ of the arrival of the blessed Athala, quickly rush to him and beg him to help them. When the man of God wanted to ignore them,⁴⁹⁹ they compel him with tears and frightful oaths to go [to the boy] before the harmful fever deprives him of his final breath.⁵⁰⁰ Athala, anxious to avoid the gossip of popular approbation,⁵⁰¹ says: 'Go and I will follow you when I can.' On his way, he visits the basilicas and holy places to pray for the sick child, so that he may immediately recover his health. Then, to fulfil his promise, he hurries to the invalid. Having entered the house secretly lest anyone should appear as a herald for the benefactor, he touches the sick child and immediately divine virtue, bestowing favour on holy prayers, returns the invalid to perfect health. At the same time the parents offer thanks

496 Krusch gives *frustra pollicis*, which makes no sense: we have read *frusta* ('bits') instead of *frustra* ('in vain').

497 Columbanus himself works two similar miracles, *VC* I: 15.

498 Krusch has *audito ... adventum*, which, as ML notes, should surely be emended to an ablative absolute: *audito adventu*.

499 The verb is *dissimulare*: it can mean 'hide', 'conceal', or 'neglect': 'ignore' seems closer to what is required here.

500 We have understood *noxius* for *noxia*, and *suprema aura* for *suppremas auras*.

501 We have followed ML in understanding *favores* as a genitive singular, *favoris*.

to the Creator, who, in such a way, bends His ear of His goodness to the petitions of His servants.

For Athala was pleasing to all and a man of singular passion, enthusiasm, and love for strangers and the poor. He knew how to stand up against the proud, and to be the servant of the humble, to win over the wise with learning, and reveal mysteries to the simple. He was wise in solving and countering questions, active and firm in dealing with the storms of heretics, strong in adversity, sober in prosperity, controlled in all things, discreet in everything.⁵⁰² Love and fear abounded in those subordinate to him,⁵⁰³ while right teaching flowed into his disciples. No one in his presence was either depressed with sorrow⁵⁰⁴ or elevated with excessive joy.

[II 5] The prophesy of [Athala's] death

When the Author of all things⁵⁰⁵ wanted to liberate him from the hardship of this life, He wished this to be revealed to him in a vision, in order that he who was about to leave the world might have a way prepared in all things, that there would be a period of fifty days set aside, in which he might prepare for the coming journey.⁵⁰⁶ But the soul of the man of God was not sure whether the journey was to be understood as the departure from this life, or if he would be going to another place, so the man of God plans for both eventualities. He strengthens the enclosure of the monastery, he repairs the roofs, reinforcing everything so that, in his absence, nothing might foolishly be lost. He quietly attends to the carts,⁵⁰⁷ he rebinds books,⁵⁰⁸ and orders coverings to be washed, tears to be sown up, things rotting to be restored, shoes to be repaired, so that everything should be ready. He himself afflicts his body with fasting, vigils, and prayers, so that he had never before been seen to exert himself so much in prayer.

502 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 183 n. 3 draws attention to the parallel in Cassian, *Conferences* II: 2; VI: 10.

503 Cf. Hilary of Arles, *Life of Honoratus* 17.

504 Cf. Hilary of Arles, *Life of Honoratus* 18.

505 The expression *rerum repertor* also occurs in *VC* II: 6, 15, 23, 25; it is used by Virgil for Jupiter (*Aeneid* XII, l. 829).

506 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 49 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 259).

507 Ducange offers 'horses' as a translation of *vehicula*.

508 For the scriptorium at Bobbio, see Zironi, *Il monastero longobardo di Bobbio* and Richter, *Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 140–56.

And lest it might seem ridiculous to anyone, let me recall what this man did concerning myself.⁵⁰⁹ As nine years had already passed since I had entered the monastic life,⁵¹⁰ and my relatives had often asked in vain for permission from Athala that I might see them, he then says to me without making any mention of their requests: 'Go quickly, my son, and visit your mother and brother; admonish them⁵¹¹ and return without delay.' But when I hesitated and said that a more suitable time would come in the future – for it was a period of extreme cold, being February – he says: 'Hurry and set out on the journey as I have told you, as you do not know whether it will be possible to do in the future.' He gave me as companions the priest Blidulf⁵¹² and the deacon Hermenoald, men of whose piety there was no doubt, and together we come to our destination. This was Susa, a famous city, which was once a colony of the Taurinati,⁵¹³ and which was 140 miles from the monastery. When we arrive there I was warmly welcomed by my mother after an interval of so many years. But my mother does not enjoy the desired gift for long. For that same night, struck with fever, I began to shout out in my burning temperature that I was being tortured by the prayers of the man of God, and that I could no longer stay there against his command. If they do not quickly remove me, and take me back to the monastery, with whatever effort I was capable of, I would soon die. My mother replied, 'It is better, my son, to know that you are there healthy than to weep for you here, dead.' I confess that it was a long time to wait until day break. We were getting ready to leave, to set out on our return journey, when dawn had scarcely broken, nor did we take any food for three days, until we had almost reached the midpoint of our journey. While hurrying and pressing on with the journey, I recovered my health again. When we came to the monastery, we found the father already overcome with fever, and close to death. When he saw us, he rejoiced. And so it became clear to us that the prayers of the man of God had prevailed in this [way], in order that the strength of my fever forced me to return quickly to the monastery before his death.

509 The longest of the references to Jonas himself.

510 As Athala died in 625 or 626, this allows us to date Jonas's entry into the monastery to 615/16, not long after Columbanus's death.

511 Krusch suggested an emendation of *mone et to monet*, in which case Athala's direct speech would end after the word 'brother', and the text would continue 'He advised me to return without delay'.

512 Blidulf appears again in *VC* II: 24.

513 The group gave their name to Turin.

[II 6] The heavens open, divine consolation, and [Athala's] death

When the last hours of this present life had come, and while his breath was still strong, he ordered that he be brought outside his cell. So rising from his bed with what strength he had, and with the brothers on all sides holding him up, he went out of his cell. Seeing the cross which he had ordered to be placed in that spot, so that by touching it with his forehead⁵¹⁴ he might protect the cell⁵¹⁵ on leaving or entering it, he became sad and cried at the thought of the victory of the cross. 'Hail, sweet cross', he says, 'you who has carried the ransom of the world and who bears the eternal standard; you bore the cure for our wounds, you were anointed with His blood, who descended from heaven to this vale of tears⁵¹⁶ to save the human race. He wiped away⁵¹⁷ the old stain of the first Adam, which had long been on you, now washing away the blot as a second Adam.'⁵¹⁸ While he did this he begs all to leave, and to return to their cells, so that they might leave him alone for a while in this place. All of the brothers left, except one called Blidemund, who stood holding his breath behind the man of God's back. He thought that, as the knees of the man of God were tired by his exhausting labours, they might cause him to fall, and so he would be at hand to catch him. When Athala thought that no one was there, he began to beseech the mercy of the Creator with many tears to grant him the gifts of his generosity, even though he was not worthy of them, and that He might restore all to salvation,⁵¹⁹ erasing his former sins, and working His time-honoured mercy, might not disinherit him from heavenly bounty.⁵²⁰ Amongst mournful sighs and floods of tears, [Athala], while watching the

514 This ritual of touching the cross is mentioned in *Communal Rule* III (SCO, pp. 146–49).

515 As ML notes, the Latin appears to mean that it is the cell that is being protected. Jonas may have intended to state that it was the man coming or going who received the blessing: that, at least, is the point made by Eustasius in *VC* II: 9, below.

516 Psalm, 83:7; John, 6:38.

517 Krusch's text is awkward here: *extendit* does not make much sense, so we have opted for the alternative reading of *extersit* (as did de Vogüé), though to do so makes the sentence tautologous.

518 Ephesians 4:26–27; 1 Corinthians 15:45–47.

519 Jonas seems to be saying that Athala was praying that the gifts which had been given to him should be restored to the state they were in before they had become stained with sin.

520 We follow ML in emending *a caelestia munera* to *a caelesti munere* ('disinherit him from heavenly bounty').

sky, saw the heavens open for him,⁵²¹ and he gazed at the sight for many hours, letting forth abundant groans from his heart. He then gave thanks to the Almighty for revealing to him the open gates of heaven, which his soul would soon enter, having been stripped from the limbs of his body. Afterwards he gave a sign for the brothers to come to take him back to his cell. The aforementioned brother told us all about these things that same day. [The Lord] reveals His consolation to His servant so that he might breathe out his last breath, rejoicing, secure in the knowledge of future pardon or rather glory.⁵²² This the man of God had wished to keep secret, had not Blidemund remained hidden behind his back. The following day, saying goodbye to all the brothers, he exhorted them so that they might not leave the way on which they had set out, but, strengthened by [ever] better deeds, might confirm their resolve daily through perseverance. Having consoled all, freed from the bonds of the present life, he returned his soul to heaven.⁵²³ Rightly the Maker of all things honours His saints with many virtues,⁵²⁴ as it is written: 'His spirit has embellished the heavens',⁵²⁵ for those seeking eternal life strive to fulfil his commands, so that they might receive the fruit of eternal life from the labour of obedience.

[II 7] The rule of Eustasius, the restoration of a girl's sight and bodily health, and her entry into a religious way of life

Venerable Eustasius, having returned as we mentioned above from blessed Columbanus in Italy, began then to govern the throng of monks⁵²⁶ set under him with paternal affection and equitable justice.⁵²⁷ It happened that in

521 Mark 1:10; Acts 7:55–56.

522 Cf. Gregory, *Dialogues* IV: 49 (trans. Zimmerman, pp. 259–60), on the monk Merulus, who has a vision that gives joy and security at the hour of death.

523 10 March, probably 626: see the discussion in Krusch, *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum*, pp. 240–41 n. 1, who concludes that the date cannot be before 625.

524 *Virtutes* might here mean 'miracles'.

525 Job 26:13.

526 *monachorum* ... *catervas* is another military image, and one in general use in Gallic/Frankish monastic circles: Jonas also uses it in *VJ* 3. As GB points out, it is frequently used by Gregory of Tours, *LGM* 75 (trans. Van Dam, p. 75); *LVP* XII: 3 (trans. James, p. 94); *LVM* IV 30 (trans. Van Dam, p. 297). It is also used in Bobolenus, *Life of Germanus of Grandval* 7 (ed. Krusch, p. 36).

527 Referring back to *VC* I: 30 and Eustasius's legation from Chlothar II to Columbanus in Bobbio. This was in 614. It is not clear when Eustasius first took over the abbacy of Luxeuil: he was with Columbanus in Bregenz, *VC* I: 27.

the interests of the community⁵²⁸ he went to King Chlothar, who at that time was residing in the furthest parts of Gaul close to the Ocean.⁵²⁹ The route of the journey that he undertook ran through the woods and district of Brie, where he came to the villa of Chagneric where once the master [Columbanus] had stayed for a while.⁵³⁰ The villa was called *Pipimisiacum*, located about two miles from the city of Meaux. There Chagneric was staying at that time with his wife, Leudegunda, a Christian and right-thinking woman.⁵³¹ Eustasius had with him their son, Chagnoald, whom we have mentioned before.⁵³² Seeing Eustasius Chagneric welcomed him with great joy. Burgundofara, the one whom Columbanus consecrated to the Lord, and whom we mentioned above, was also there with her father and mother.⁵³³ However, her father had arranged her engagement and wanted to have her married, against the girl's will. Burgundofara had been struck with an eye infection,⁵³⁴ and had such a burning fever that it was already thought that she would soon die. She being in the state of drawing her final breath, Eustasius rebukes her father and tells him that it was due to him that she was being burned by such great torments because he wishes to violate the decree of the man of God. Chagneric replies deceitfully, 'If only she were restored to health and attending divine services!' He says that he ought not to stand in the way of her religious vows.⁵³⁵ Then approaching the girl's bed, Eustasius asks her if it would be of her own free will that, going against the decree of blessed Columbanus, she would again take earthly vows, having made divine ones. But the girl assures him that she has never submitted to such vows so as to exchange heavenly vows for those of this earth. She had been, and still was, obedient to the blessed man's commands, and she tells him that the night gone by she had seen a man that looked like him. At the same time she heard a voice saying, 'For you are the one who

528 GC suggests the more literal translation 'for the common need'.

529 This refers to Neustria. See *VC* I: 24; cf. I: 16.

530 In *VC* I: 26 Columbanus meets Chagneric in Meaux. On the villa of *Pimisiacum* (modern-day Poincy), which is about 4 km from the Gallo-Roman *civitas* of Meaux, see the note in de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 188 n. 3, and the discussion in Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', pp. 813–16.

531 *Sanae mentis* means 'orthodox' in *VC* II: 9, and 'attachment to the rule' in *VC* II: 10. Here Jonas presumably wants to make a distinction between the pious woman and her impious husband (de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 188 n. 4).

532 Chagnoald was at this time a monk of Luxeuil. He was mentioned in *VC* I: 15, 27, 28.

533 *VC* I: 26, where Chagnoald was not mentioned.

534 *dolore oculorum*.

535 It is unclear whether this is a statement of Eustasius or of Chagneric.

would give me back my sight.’⁵³⁶ And, ‘Whatever this man tells you, do it and you will be healed.’ ‘Tell me then the things that I ought to obey, and drive from me by your prayers the pain with which the Lord has afflicted me.’ Then the venerable man prostrates himself on the ground, and with tears appeals to the Lord that He might grant the promised gift. Rising, he makes the sign of the cross over her eyes and, stroking her eyes with his hand, begs for the Lord’s help to come. At once she recovers her health, her sight is restored, the fever abates, and he entrusts her, restored to health, to her mother, so that on his return from Chlothar he might invest her with the religious habit.

When Burgundofara’s father saw that his daughter had recovered her health, he decides to give her to her betrothed, [thus] consigning his former promise to the blind pit of oblivion. When the girl found this out, she followed the advice of one of her friends, with whom she seeks to escape. And when she had given her consent, they made their escape, happy to have slipped away unnoticed, and came to the basilica of blessed Peter the apostle.⁵³⁷ Having discovered this, Burgundofara’s father is furious, sends his servants after them, and orders them cruelly to kill his daughter, once they have caught her. On the way the servants find that the girl has taken sanctuary within the church. They stay there for a short time so that the anger of her father might abate, while threatening the girl with risk of death. But she says to them, ‘If you think that I am afraid of death, test me on the floor of this church. For such a cause I would joyfully accept death for Him who did not refuse to die for me.’ Just then Eustasius returns, frees the girl from her confinement, and rebukes the father terribly. He dresses her in the religious habit at the hands of Gundold, bishop of that city,⁵³⁸ and consecrated her with the saving sacraments. He founds a monastery for the virgins of Christ on her father’s land between the Morin and Aubetin rivers, and deposes brothers to be responsible for its construction.⁵³⁹ He instructs the girl’s brother, Chagnoald, and Waldebert, who afterwards succeeded him, to teach the Rule. The many miracles which occurred in this monastery we will describe in detail, if life remains with us.⁵⁴⁰

536 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 189 n. 7 notes a parallel with Possidius, *Life of Augustine* 29 and Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* III: 25 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 158).

537 The location of this church is unknown. Perhaps it was the basilica of Meaux. See Krusch, *Jonae Vitae Sanctorum*, p. 242 n. 1.

538 Gundold attested the councils of Paris (614) and Clichy (626/27) as bishop of Meaux.

539 Literally, ‘who might have a care of building’.

540 This is an important indication that the section on Faremoutiers (*VC* II: 11–22) was

[II 8] The healing of another girl's sight and the progress of those converted to the religious life

Having returned to Luxeuil the venerable man Eustasius prepares to fulfil the command of the master so that the neighbouring peoples might be nourished with the sustenance of faith.⁵⁴¹ He sets out and preaches to the *Warasci*,⁵⁴² some of whom were devoted to the cults of idols, while others were stained with the error of Photinus and Bonosus.⁵⁴³ When he had converted these people to the faith, he presses on to the *Boias*, who are now called *Baioarii*.⁵⁴⁴ Having educated them with great labour, and reformed them by the soothing remedy of faith, he converts many of them. When he had stayed there for a while, he dispatched wise men who would exert themselves wholeheartedly in the work which he had begun: he himself is keen to return to Luxeuil.

When he was on his way, he came to [the home] of a certain Gundoin who at that time was staying at the villa called *Mosa* on account of the river that flows there.⁵⁴⁵ When Gundoin saw Eustasius he joyfully welcomed him

written after that on Luxeuil, and was intended to follow it: see Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*'.

541 This command is not mentioned in *VC* I: 30, where Jonas reported Eustasius's mission to Columbanus in Bobbio. It is an important indication of Eustasius's commitment to mission. Whether Columbanus himself had the same depth of commitment is open to question: despite the account provided by Jonas in *VC* I: 27, in *Ep.* IV: 5 (*SCO*, pp. 30–31), Columbanus notes that he himself lost interest in converting the heathen.

542 The *Warasci* were a group settled in the region of the Doubs: they are mentioned in *Life of Sadalberga* 7.

543 Photinus, bishop of Sirmium in the fourth century, was thought to have denied the incarnation and to have preached that Christ was merely adopted by God. The same heresy was attributed to Bonosus, the fourth-century bishop of Sardica, who, more certainly, claimed that Mary had other children after the birth of Christ. See also Gennadius, *De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis* 14, PL 58, col. 1068. Columbanus, *Penitential* (B 25) (*SCO*, pp. 178–79) reveals a knowledge of the *Bonosiaci*, and they appear in the canons of the Councils of Orléans (538), c. 34, and Clichy (626–27), c. 5 (see Basdevant, *Les canons des conciles mérovingiens*, I, pp. 256–57; II, pp. 532–33). Bonosiacs and Photinians are also attested in the region of Burgundy in the writings of the early sixth-century bishop Avitus of Vienne: see *Contra Eutychianam Haeresim* II:13; *Ep.* 31 (trans. Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, pp. 107, 118, 165–66, 169, 230–31).

544 A very early attestation of the name of the Bavarians: see Green, 'The *Boii*, Bohemia, Bavaria', pp. 19, 20 and Wood, 'Religion in pre-Carolingian Thuringia and Bavaria', p. 320.

545 The village of Meuse in Haute-Marne, 10 km west from the source of the river Meuse. Cf. *VC* I: 20, where Cora is the name of the village and the river. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 191 n. 5.

into his home, as if he were a most pleasing gift. Having entered the house and given his blessing,⁵⁴⁶ Eustasius asks the man to present his children to him. Obediently he presented two promising boys called Bobo and Odo.⁵⁴⁷ ‘Do you have any other children’, Eustasius asks. Gundoin confesses that he had no other children, apart from one daughter called Sadalberga who was blind.⁵⁴⁸ ‘Let her come’, Eustasius says. When Eustasius saw her, he asked her whether her young mind aspired to the cult of the fear of God.⁵⁴⁹ With complete agreement – as far as her tender age could – she says that she was prepared to commit herself to holy prayers.⁵⁵⁰ Eustasius then set about fasting for two days⁵⁵¹ and strengthened his mind with faith. He poured out the oil of benediction over Sadalberga’s eyes, and at length blindness was found worthy to receive sight through the intervention of the holy man. Divine goodness made good the loss of her sight through the intervention of His servant, so that she, who had regained her sight, might aspire after the divine gift even more to the cult of the fear of God. Sadalberga is still alive and devoted to divine services, and she provides what is useful not only for her own benefit, but for others.

After Eustasius had set out from there and was proceeding on his journey, a fiery fever vehemently seized a certain brother called Agilus,⁵⁵² who is now the abbot of the monastery of Rebais.⁵⁵³ Eustasius touched

546 Columbanus also blessed the house before he blessed the children. Cf. *VC* I: 26.

547 It is only in the Metz manuscript that one finds the names, but see *Life of Sadalberga* 5.

548 There is a *Life of Sadalberga*, which is now recognized as an authentic text of the 680s: Hummer, ‘Die merowingische Herkunft der *Vita Sadalbergae*’ and Gaillard, ‘Les saints de l’abbaye Sainte-Marie-Saint-Jean de Laon’, *Sources hagiographiques de la Gaule XI*, pp. 321–28. It is worth noting how much less attention Jonas pays to the community of Sadalberga than to that of Burgundofara: part of the explanation may be his personal involvement in the community of Faremoutiers: see *VC* II: 12, below.

549 The Metz manuscript has *cultum divini amoris*; the other manuscripts have *cultum divini timoris*. The first makes more immediate sense, but the fact that the phrase *cultum divini timoris* recurs later on in the same episode makes it probable that the *lectio difficilior* is the better, and that the scribe of the Metz manuscript corrected what seemed to be an oddity.

550 We follow ML’s advice on the meaning of *praeconia*.

551 Three, according to the *Life of Sadalberga* 5 and *Life of Agilus* 11.

552 Agilus was the son of Agnoald, and nephew of Chagneric, who appears in *VC* I: 26.

553 Rebais was founded by Audoin in c.635. Note that Jonas uses the term *praesul* and not *abbas* for Agilus. Athala and Eustaius are also termed *praesules* in *VC*, *Ep.* to Waldebert and Bobolenus. Sinilis is described as *abbatem* in the chapter heading of I: 4 although this may be an interpolation. Bertulf also appears as *abbas* in the chapter heading of II: 23, but he is called *praesul* in the chapter itself. This appears to have been the standard term Jonas used for abbot. Agilus became abbot of Rebais in c.635. There is a *Life of Agilus*, although its date, and therefore its factual reliability, is contested.

him and healed him through the intervention of his prayer. At once Agilus returned to perfect health. Then Eustasius arrived at the aforementioned monastery [Luxeuil]. He strives there to rouse the monastic community as much as the neighbouring people to Christian vigour, and he drew many of them to the remedies of penance.⁵⁵⁴ It was his concern to instruct many by his eloquence. Many [of his monks] later became bishops:⁵⁵⁵ Chagnoald of Laon; Acharius of Vermand, Noyon, and Tournai; Ragnacharius of Augst and Bâle; Audomar of Boulogne and Thérouanne.

[II 9] The opposition of Agrestius and his refutation⁵⁵⁶

Eustasius was by now held in high esteem by everyone, so that no one lamented that they had lost the blessed Columbanus, particularly when they saw that the teachings of the master flowed into the pupil, as he had been instructed by his teaching. And therefore, as he was loved by all, and was supported by the honour of all the Frankish nobles, and was spoken of with love and veneration by King Chlothar, the envious Serpent⁵⁵⁷ blazes up, as usual, against the reputation of the saints, and arouses from the bosom of a mother a new Cain, who in his zeal wishes to kill his brother, or indeed a new traitor, who would tear to pieces the commands of the master, and

554 For *paenitentiae medicamenta*, see also *VC* I: 5, 10; II: 1, 15, 25. See also the discussion in the introduction, section 3, above.

555 The word used is *praesul*; here it clearly means bishop, but see the note on Agilus above. Chagnoald and Acharius were present at Clichy (626/27), where Chagnoald appears as Hainoald and Acharius as Aigahardus (Basdevant, *Les canons des conciles mérovingiens* II, pp. 544–45); Acharius died in 640.

556 The chapter that follows is central to Jonas's concerns in writing the *VC*, and especially for the composition of Book Two. At the heart of the text is a claim that Athala, Eustasius, Burgundofara, Bertulf, and Jonas himself were the true heirs of Columbanus. This involved an element of misrepresentation, because Columbanian monasticism and the theological position of its leaders had evolved since the founder's death; see Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography'. One aspect of Jonas's strategy was the denigration of those who challenged the position taken by Eustasius and Athala: chief among these was Agrestius. But, although he is presented as departing from the traditions established by Columbanus, it is probable that on some issues (for instance, the Tricapitoline Schism) he was closer to Columbanus than were those who condemned him. The extent to which Agrestius upheld Columbanus's views, however, is uncertain, because we only have the account of his denigrators.

557 Chelidrus was a legendary serpent: Vergil, *Georgics* III, l. 145. See also Sedulius, *Carmen Paschale* III, l. 190. Here it simply stands for the Devil. Cf. Genesis 4:8 and Matthew 26:14–16.

trampling on what was solid, would bend his weak mind to the weak ears of the common crowd. He⁵⁵⁸ incites one of the monks called Agrestius, who had formerly been a notary of King Theuderic.⁵⁵⁹ Agrestius had been touched by a compunction of heart to leave everything he possessed, and to come to Luxeuil, where he gave himself and all of his things to the aforementioned father. To tell all: Agrestius, presenting the appearance of religious observance in the monastery, asks permission to preach to the pagans. The holy man rebukes him, chiding him at length, saying that one who was still a novice in religion should not consider himself suitable for such work. Such a man ought to be dignified with every mark of ecclesiastical distinction. For Jeremiah, who was sent ahead, chosen by the Lord, denies that he is worthy, saying 'Ah, ah, ah, behold Lord God I am a boy, I cannot speak',⁵⁶⁰ and Moses, chosen by the Lord, professes himself slow of speech.⁵⁶¹

Having said these things, but having achieved nothing, Eustasius permits him whom he cannot hold to leave. So Agrestius left and came to the *Baioarii*. He stayed there a little while, cultivating no fruit, just as the plane-tree shakes its high noisy and vain leaves to the trembling breeze, not knowing the abundance of fruit.⁵⁶² Then Agrestius goes to Aquileia. The Aquileians, in fact, cut themselves off from communion with the Apostolic See – of which the Lord in the Gospel says to the blessed prince of the apostles, Peter: 'You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.'⁵⁶³ This was due to the disagreement over the Three Chapters, the growing discord from which flowed for a long time, but which is not to be included in this work.⁵⁶⁴ And

558 The devil or the snake is understood.

559 On Agrestius's family and supporters, see Dumézil, 'L'affaire Agrestius de Luxeuil'; Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, p. 94; Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity and the Framing of Western Ethnicity*.

560 Jeremiah 1:6. See also Exodus 4:10; Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob* 35, 3.

561 Exodus 4:10.

562 See Vergil, *Georgics* II: 70: *steriles platani*. As in the case of *VC* I: 2, above, GB notes an allusion to the parable of the 'unfruitful tree': Matthew 3:10, 7:19, 21:19; Mark 11:14; Luke 3:9; John 15:1–17.

563 Matthew 16:18.

564 The Three Chapters schism was a response to Justinian's condemnation of works by the fifth-century theologians Theodore, Theodoret, and Ibas. Initially, the papacy opposed the condemnation, but then, under duress, Pope Vigilius gave way: as a result of which part of the western Church broke ranks with Rome. One of the centres of opposition to the papal stance was the see of Aquileia, with the result that the Tricapitoline Schism is also called the Aquileian Schism. Jonas's use of the present tense here may reflect the fact that

so coming to Aquileia, Agrestius at once joined the schismatics. Having broken from communion with the See of Rome, and separated from communion with the whole world, he condemned all those who remained joined to the Roman See, maintaining that orthodox faith was retained in Aquileia alone. Steeped in this schism, he sent a venomous letter full of rebukes to the blessed Athala through Aureus, a notary of Adalwald, king of the Lombards.⁵⁶⁵ The blessed Athala, having read this, considered it ridiculous and gave it to me to be archived: for many years, I had it set aside, but afterwards lost it through my own negligence.⁵⁶⁶ No one else wrote it: he did so with his own hand.

Having sent the letter to blessed Athala, he himself went to Luxeuil. He tempts Eustasius with the prods of schism,⁵⁶⁷ to see if he can corrupt his sane mind with his insanity. Having realized this, the venerable man warns the miscreant for a long time with paternal advice. But after he had been unable to cure the mind infected with the pestilence by salutary advice and by healthy remedy, he cut him off from his and the brothers' company.

Dismissed by Eustasius, Agrestius plunges in here and there, to win some adherents to his opinion. But as his lack of skill was unable to achieve anything, he attacks the religious observance of blessed Columbanus, prattling against his rule with the teeth of a butcher, and grunting like a filthy pig, as a result of which he was able to stir up others, whose arrogance was similar to his. Abelenus, bishop of Geneva, and who was a close relative of Agrestius, came over to his side.⁵⁶⁸ Abelenus tried as best he could to associate the neighbouring bishops as a group with himself in support of Agrestius, so that they might tempt King Chlothar to become an adherent

the schism continued during his lifetime, down to 698. See Chazelle and Cubitt, *The Crisis of the Oikoumene*. This was a major issue for Columbanus, who wrote criticizing the papal stance in *Ep. V (SCO)*, pp. 36–57). It would seem that Columbanus aligned himself with the schismatics: which would mean that theologically Agrestius was closer to the Irishman than was Eustasius. Jonas had every reason to pass over the problem. See also Gray and Herren, 'Columbanus and the Three Chapters Controversy – A New Approach'.

565 Adalwald, who ruled from 602 to 626, was the son of the Arian Authari and the catholic Theodelinda. He himself was catholic, but seems to have supported the Aquileian schismatics.

566 This is an important indication of Jonas's own role as archivist at Bobbio. He clearly felt that he had to show that the letter was not a forgery: see the comment by Krusch, *Jonas Vitae Sanctorum*, p. 247 n. 2.

567 Jonas may deliberately have chosen the word *aculeus* ('sting') as a pun on *Aquilegensis*.

568 On Abelenus, see Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, p. 94. Fredegar IV: 37 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 29) names an Abelenus (presumably a close relative) as *comes* of Transjura.

of their faction. But Chlothar, knowing and having learnt from experience of the sanctity of blessed Columbanus and the teaching of his disciples, attempts to refute with his answers those who were grunting like a pig against the holy doctrine. When this had no effect, he decided to have the case examined in a synod, having no doubt about the authority and teaching of the blessed Eustasius, that he would overcome all the opponents of the holy Rule, through wisdom, skill and with the support of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, on royal authority many bishops of Burgundy convene on the outskirts of the city of Mâcon.⁵⁶⁹ Treticus⁵⁷⁰ presided as the most senior among them, whom Warnachar,⁵⁷¹ because he was an enemy of Eustasius, had urged to be made chief of the synod. But the supplication of Eustasius prevailed, so that he who wished to become the author and backer of this wretched plot was punished by the Lord, and through him the strength of all [those with him] was shattered. For on the day chosen and appointed, when the dispute against Eustasius should have begun, Warnachar was forestalled by death and died.⁵⁷² With him the strength of Agrestius's faction is broken and thrown into confusion, and everyone asks Agrestius what objections he raised against the Rule of blessed Columbanus and venerable Eustasius. But Agrestius (with trembling lips, having no authority or eloquence) replies that unnecessary acts, contrary to canonical practice, are performed by them. When they pressed him further he finally reveals the cause of their crime: their Rule required that the cup which was used for drinking was frequently to be marked with the sign of the cross,⁵⁷³ and whoever entered or left any building within the monastery should ask for

569 The Council of Mâcon is dated 626/27. See Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions*, pp. 48–55. Also Stansbury, 'Agrestius et l'écriture de Luxeuil'.

570 Bishop of Lyon, also attended Clichy (626/27), where his name is the first of the signatories (Basdevant, *Les canons des conciles mérovingiens*, pp. 542–43). The Metz manuscript adds the identification of his see.

571 On Warnachar, the Burgundian *maior palatii*, see Fredegar IV: 40–42, 44, 54 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 33–34, 37, 44).

572 For his death in 626/27, see Fredegar IV: 54 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 44).

573 The meaning of *coclea* here is unclear. The word occurs in Columbanus, *Communal Rule I*: *Et qui non signaverit coclea quo lambit sex percussioneibus*, which Walker (SCO, pp. 146–47) translated as 'And him who has not blessed the spoon with which he sups with six blows'. Jonas clearly had this passage in mind, since he uses the same verb, *lambit*. However, although *cochlear* does indeed mean 'spoon', and gives the modern French *cuiller*, it is not clear that *coclea* has the same meaning. In classical Latin (as noted in Lewis and Short) it means a 'snail' or a 'snail shell'. Krusch, *Jonae Vitae Sanctorum*, p. 249 n. 4 thought it simply meant 'a drinking vessel, in the form of a shell', and this is the meaning we have adopted.

a blessing.⁵⁷⁴ When the [bishops] realized that there was nothing of note to be criticized by synodal pronouncement, they ask if he has anything else which he opposes. At this Agrestius shouts out that he knows that the customs of Columbanus differ from others and that the solemnities of the Mass itself are celebrated with the addition of prayers and collects⁵⁷⁵ and many other superfluous things, which, together with their author, should be detested, as if they were heretical traditions.⁵⁷⁶

Eustasius, having heard that he and his monks together with his master had been branded as heretics, says: 'It is you, ornament of the priesthood, who ought to examine who distributes the seeds of truth and justice in the churches, and who hands over what is alien to truth and true religion. For whatever is in disagreement with the straight path of truth ought to be considered to lie outside the body of the Church. It is your task to determine whether these points, of which we are accused, are contrary to the line of Scriptures.'⁵⁷⁷ And they say, 'We wish to know from you what appropriate things you say in response to this.' Eustasius replies, 'By no means do I think it to be contrary to religion if a cup,⁵⁷⁸ vessel, or bowl from which a Christian sups is protected with the sign of the cross,⁵⁷⁹ as by the coming of the Lord's sign the disease of the hostile adversary is driven off. When a monk indeed enters or leaves his cell I think it right for him to be armed with the blessing of the Lord according to the voice of the Psalmist: "The Lord keep you safe from all evil; may the Lord protect your soul. Let the Lord watch over your coming and your going from this moment and forever."⁵⁸⁰ This may refer to each and every Christian, since he is

574 See Columbanus, *Communal Rule* III: *Qui egrediens domum ad orationem poscendam non se humiliaverit ... xii percussioneibus emendare statuitur*: 'He who on leaving the house has not prostrated himself to ask a prayer ... it is ordained to correct with twelve blows' (trans. Walker, *SCO*, pp. 146–49).

575 See Columbanus, *Rule for Monks*, VII (*SCO*, pp. 128–33).

576 Jonas seems to have chosen the most minor of Agrestius's criticisms, in order to make his case look worthless. In fact, it would seem that there were far greater points at issue at Mâcon, not least the question of the date of Easter: it may well be that it was at the synod that Eustasius and the Luxeuil community agreed to abandon the Irish Easter. See Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions*, pp. 51–55. In all probability, a number of concessions to those critical of the practices of Luxeuil were made.

577 With regard to the points that Jonas chooses to detail, the Luxeuil contingent were orthodox. Over other matters, for instance, the calculation of the date of Easter, they, arguably, were not.

578 *Coclea*, again: see n. 573, above.

579 See Columbanus, *Communal Rule* I (*SCO*, pp. 146–47).

580 Psalms 120:7–8.

preserved by the grace of baptism, through faith, in becoming a member of the Church, and up to the end he is strengthened by the vigour of perseverance.⁵⁸¹ Nevertheless, in our daily movement, whether in entering or leaving or while travelling, I consider it correct that each one should be armed with the sign of the cross, to be reinforced with the blessing of his companions. I also believe that the multiplication of prayers in the sacred Office benefits all the churches. Indeed, when the Lord is sought more, He is found more, and when He is more fully besought with prayer, He is more quickly incited to grant mercy to those who asked for it. There is nothing we ought to exert ourselves in more than to bow in prayer. Thus are we, together with the apostles, encouraged by the Lord, “Watch and pray so that you may not enter into temptation.”⁵⁸² The apostle too asks us to pray unceasingly, and every section of sacred Scripture commands us to cry out, for he who neglects to cry out, disregarded and cut off is cast aside from the members of Christ. For nothing is so useful and so beneficial than to beseech the Creator with a multiplication of petitions and in the repetition of prayers.’ Agrestius, being confounded by these and similar responses, increases his evil chattering, finding fault with the different manner of the tonsure, that it expresses a different style, and that it differs from the customs of everyone else.⁵⁸³

[II 10] The punishment of the followers of Agrestius, his violent end,⁵⁸⁴ and the death of Eustasius

To this nit-picking⁵⁸⁵ and frivolous blather, Eustasius, wise man that he was, adorned with the virtue of patience and wisdom, replies: ‘I, his disciple and successor, whose teaching and customs you condemn, challenge you

581 Matthew 10:22.

582 Matthew 26:41; 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

583 The Irish style of tonsure differed from that in use elsewhere in the sixth and seventh centuries (though it reflected earlier practice): the whole of the front rather than the crown of the head was shaven. Although Jonas dismisses this as insignificant, the issue was taken up by the Anglo-Saxon Church at the Synod of Whitby in 664, and Bede most certainly regarded it as a matter of importance (*Ecclesiastical History of the English People* III: 25–26; V: 21–22); James, ‘Bede and the Tonsure Question’. The tonsure may well have been an issue, like the dating of Easter, on which Luxeuil had to accept Frankish practice. See McCarthy, ‘On the Shape of the Insular Tonsure’.

584 Jonas distinguishes between the *interitus* of Agrestius and the *obitus* of Eustasius.

585 Jonas uses the pompous phrase *conperendinanti migrologa*. Columbanus himself uses the word *micrologus* ironically in *Epp.* I: 2; V: 1 (*SCO*, pp. 2–3, 36–37).

in the presence of these bishops to plead your case to divine judgement with him before the end of the year, so that you may be subject to the examination of the Just Judge, whose servant you attempt to dishonour by your accusations.' Having said this, fear struck some of those who were members of Agrestius's faction, and everyone urges them to make peace; Agrestius should retract his audacious presumption and temerity, while Eustasius should cherish him who had slipped, with paternal affection and pious rebukes. Eustasius replied to this: 'I willingly fall in with your prayers, if my poor spirit can soften the hardness of his shame, and having changed direction, with his disease cut out by cauterization, and his innards purged with an antidote, he may strive to return to what leads to salvation.' With everyone forcing him, Agrestius asks for a pretended peace, as became apparent in his subsequent actions. Eustasius, mild of soul and virtuous of mind, agrees to the arguments of those who asked, offers reconciliation, and gives the kiss of peace.

Although Agrestius drove out the manifest madness through fear of shame, he had not, however, withdrawn from all evil. Agrestius then begins to test the monasteries, and in the guise of a disciple to assess the price of betrayal, coming to the venerable man Romaric,⁵⁸⁶ who had been considered first amongst the nobles by Theudebert, and afterwards, taking advice from the example of blessed Columba and the preaching of Eustasius, coming to Luxeuil, he submitted himself to the customs of absolute rule.⁵⁸⁷ For a considerable time Romaric pursued life according to the Rule, but afterwards with Eustasius's assent he constructed a convent for women on his own land in which he introduced the observation of the Rule of blessed Columbanus. When, therefore, he was already outstanding in his piety, Agrestius came to him, pretending to submit himself, and to be obedient to him, and at the same time tempts Amatus,⁵⁸⁸ whom Eustasius had put in charge in order to give instruction on the Rule, with subtle insinuations. For at that time both Amatus and Romaric had been reprimanded by Eustasius for having neglected certain things. When he

586 The founder and second abbot of Remiremont. Along with the first and third abbots (Amatus and Adelphius), Romaric is the subject of a *vita*, written at some point after 673 (Heinzelmann, 'L'hagiographie mérovingienne', p. 78). He is the subject of a remarkably critical assessment from Jonas.

587 Following Krusch's interpretation of *monarchia*. One wonders whether 'monastic custom' is what Jonas intended.

588 Amatus, like Romaric and Adelphius, is the subject of a *vita*, dating perhaps from the last decades of the seventh century: Heinzelmann, 'L'hagiographie mérovingienne', p. 78.

saw that they were hurt, so that he could more easily win over their irritated minds to his assertions, he incited their sound minds to take in bit by bit his poisonous words, and to propagate his own madness in contempt of the Rule of blessed Columbanus. For shame! Agrestius, raving, stained sound teachings with his destructive advice and deadly insinuation. They, having rejected the former customs, sought to instruct the monastic community with coarse teachings, and they were not afraid to bring back in its jealous zeal the Serpent, which, as Job said, had been drawn out by the obstetric hand of God.⁵⁸⁹

Then Agrestius goes to Burgundofara, so that he might taint her with his incitement if he could. The virgin of Christ, acting not like a woman, but manfully, confounds him with her response: 'Surely you, opponent of truth and inseminator of new arguments, have not come to this place in order to infuse sweet honey with your poison, and to change the food of life with lethal bitterness? You accuse those whose virtues I proclaim that I experienced,⁵⁹⁰ whose beneficial teaching I received, and through whose instruction I know for certain many have entered the heavenly kingdom. I would wish you to recall the saying of Isaiah: "Woe to you who call bad good and good bad."⁵⁹¹ Make haste and quickly retract from this madness.' Agrestius, having been refuted by these arguments of the servant of Christ, returns to Romaric and Amatus so as to worsen the wrinkle⁵⁹² of deception that he had begun.

Divine punishment was not long in coming. While they were all now incited to assent to the rejection of what had been written, first wolves infected with rabies, breaching the enclosure in the dead of night, bit and mauled two of those who were supporters of these views, and, having left them with the poison of rabies, condemned them to a miserable death. The rabies of demons attacked another, called Plaireius, who had ardently kindled the tinder of this discord, and handed him over to an ignoble death, for he hanged himself by his own hand. But when this punishment failed entirely to act as a correction for the delinquents, a greater one followed at

589 Job, 26:13: 'His spirit hath adorned the heavens, and his obstetric hand brought forth the winding serpent.' The reference to the heavens led commentators on Job to see this as a reference to the constellation known as the Serpent (Draco). Jonas's use of the text, however, is somewhat opaque.

590 In classical Latin, *expers* means 'having no part in'. As Niermeyer notes, in early medieval Latin it comes to mean *expertus*, 'experienced'.

591 Isaiah 5:20.

592 As GC notes, this would seem to be a reference to Ephesians 5:27.

once. For suddenly lightning falls from the sky and strikes the place with such noise that it fills the church, destroys the roofs, burns and kills the community, so that the present correction showed the need to flee future wrath to those nuns⁵⁹³ who had assented slothfully to persuasion, as a result of excessive simplicity mixed with cunning. Up to this point twenty nuns had died; then death seizes one by one those who had been struck down with fear, so that in the course of this punishment it was reckoned that more than fifty died. Yet, without a doubt, the author of the crime had been spared so that he might repent: if he acknowledges and retracts he will without doubt recover his soundness of mind.⁵⁹⁴ For the Lord desires no one to perish, but He always hopes to return the man overthrown by serious error through the remedy of penance.

Since Agrestius had not understood that the [opportunity] for penance had been offered to him many times, he died, so that the sentence of Eustasius summoning him to judgement might be fulfilled, struck down by a blow of an axe from his own servant, whom he himself had freed, thirty days before the end of the year.⁵⁹⁵ The cause of the crime was said to have been Agrestius's involvement with the man's wife. That anyway was what many said and wish to assert as the truth; however, it is not for us to confirm this. For God,⁵⁹⁶ according to Solomon, leads all to judgement for every failing, whether good or bad,⁵⁹⁷ and the apostle says: 'and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is'.⁵⁹⁸ What we must say however is: this just sentence of the Divine Judge did not delay to strike him down, in order that it might teach his followers to flee from attacking the servants of God, and that He would repay acts of stubbornness with appropriate punishment.

Amatus and Romaric, begging pardon of venerable Eustasius, receive it, and, having set aside their disobedience,⁵⁹⁹ they flourish. On their part, Abelenus⁶⁰⁰ and the other Gallic bishops now turn to support the principles⁶⁰¹

593 Remiremont was a community of nuns. There is also an echo of Matthew 3:7.

594 As ML notes, *sanitas* is not limited to physical health.

595 The same manner of death that had befallen the rebel monk Theudemund in *VC* II: 1.

596 This is the only time that Jonas uses the term *Deus*, rather than a synonym, for God.

597 Ecclesiastes 12:14.

598 1 Corinthians 3:13.

599 *Desidia* ought to mean 'idleness', and could refer to sloth in wanting a relaxation of the Rule, which chimes with the stress throughout the *VC* on obedience. But it might also cover the error in accepting Agrestius.

600 Bishop of Geneva: see *VC* II: 9, above.

601 *Instituta* could mean either the foundations or the customs of the saint.

of Columbanus. How many monasteries they establish out of love for Columbanus and his rule, how many communities they set up,⁶⁰² and how many flocks they gather for Christ! Among them at the time was a man of illustrious standing,⁶⁰³ Eligius, who is now bishop of the Vermandois,⁶⁰⁴ – whom I should not elevate with my judgement lest I be accused of being a flatterer⁶⁰⁵ – established near to the city of Limoges, the distinguished monastery of Solignac, above the river Vienne, four miles distant from the city, as well as many other communities in the same region.⁶⁰⁶ He also founds a convent in Paris, which he had received as a gift from the king, over which he placed the virgin of Christ, Aurea.⁶⁰⁷ In the city of Bourges, a noble and religious woman, Berthoara, established a convent according to the Rule of blessed Columbanus.⁶⁰⁸ On the outskirts of the same city of Bourges, the venerable man Theudulf, surnamed Babelenus, in the full flush of his devotion,⁶⁰⁹ established monasteries according to the Rule of Columbanus. The first was on an island in the river Marmande, where he gathered a community of religious men.⁶¹⁰ The other, which is called *Gaudiacum*, is situated not far from the stream l'Auboïs.⁶¹¹ The third was

602 *Plebs* in classical Latin implies ordinary people: in the early medieval period, it comes to mean 'Christians' and even the 'parish' (hence *pieve* in Italian and *ploue* in Breton). Here it cannot mean 'parish' but must mean 'Christian community', presumably monastic.

603 The phrase *vir inluster* originates as a Roman honorific title referring to members of the higher aristocracy. In the Merovingian period, it tends to be used for men associated with the royal court. See the discussion in Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography*, p. 70.

604 Interestingly, Jonas calls Eligius bishop of the Vermandois, rather than of Noyon, which is thought to have become the diocesan centre in the late sixth century, Vermand being the older *civitas* centre. Eligius signs the council of Chalon (647/53) as *episcopus Noviomensis* (Basdevant, *Les canons des conciles mérovingiens*, pp. 562–63). He was consecrated bishop on 13 May 641, in succession to Acharius. Cf. *Life of Eligius* II: 2.

605 Echo of Jerome, *De viris illustribus* (*On Illustrious Men*) 124.

606 See *Life of Eligius* I: 15–16. The foundation charter of Solignac mentions the rule of Columbanus and Benedict. As de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 202 n. 16 notes, the charter names Benedict before Columbanus.

607 St-Martial, situated on the Seine, near the present-day Palais de Justice. See *Life of Eligius* I: 17–18, which records that the community numbered 300 nuns, 160 of whom, along with Aurea, died of the plague (II, 54). For equivalent figures, see Wood, 'Entrusting Western Europe to the Church, 400–750', pp. 67–68.

608 See *Life of Austregisil* 9, 13.

609 We follow ML's rendering of the Latin, which literally means 'with all his devotion availing'.

610 Now Isle, 14 km south-east of Charenton.

611 Near Sancoins (Cher).

for the virgins of Christ and is situated at a place called Charenton on the aforementioned river Marmande. He also established another community of the virgins of Christ near to the town of Nevers which was subject to the same Rule.⁶¹²

And so, after these victories blessed Eustasius seeks to correct the delinquents and he decided to accommodate those who survived to his peace.⁶¹³ Thereon the gathering of monks obedient to him in the aforesaid community greatly increased,⁶¹⁴ so that many monasteries were now founded in the neighbouring places, which his successor, Waldebert, organized and built. While awaiting the blessed end to this life, Eustasius energetically exerts all his energy⁶¹⁵ contemplating texts of sacred prayers,⁶¹⁶ and pouring out his prayers he directs them intently to God alone. And when his energy had been devoted to this work for the cycle of many years besides, the time of his calling comes, the sentence of the Just Judge is delivered, that what the passage of past years had not purged with diverse afflictions, infirmity of the body of a few days might cure. During the fires of this punishment Eustasius, asked in a nocturnal vision whether he would prefer to be cured by lighter punishments for the space of forty days,⁶¹⁷ or having been purged in a more severe fire for thirty days, to enter heaven having gained the blessed life, he replies that it is better to submit to scourges, however harsh, for a short time than to be consumed by milder punishments for a longer time. He therefore completed the corporal punishment he had foreseen and chosen. On the thirtieth day, he says goodbye to everyone, and utters a sad promise to those who remained behind, by announcing that he would die that same day. Having received the last rites, he returned his soul to heaven. He left behind nothing but grief to the survivors, and his paternal rule and the example of his religious way of life to the living. With the riches of

612 This list of monasteries subject to the 'Rule of Columbanus' is the most extensive description of early 'Columbanian' foundations, and is key to any consideration of the subject.

613 Following ML's suggestion, we have read Krusch's *suae pacis* as *suae paci*.

614 Reading *maxime* instead of *maxima*.

615 In what follows, the word *intentio* is used three times, no doubt deliberately: the intended effect and meaning are, however, opaque.

616 For *praeconium*, Niermeyer offers 'praise of God', and Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens* suggests 'prayers' or 'hymns'. ML notes that one might translate the phrase either as 'contemplating writings of sacred achievements' or 'contemplating texts of sacred prayers'.

617 Forty days is, of course, the length of Lent.

a victory gained, he penetrated the celestial kingdoms, with Christ as his guide,⁶¹⁸ to whom is power and honour for ever and ever. Amen.⁶¹⁹

[II 11] The monastery of Faremoutiers [*Eboriacus*], the death of Sisetrudis, and the angelic singing⁶²⁰

I wish to remind the reader⁶²¹ that I previously made a promise concerning the monastery of the above-mentioned Burgundofara, which they call *Evoriacas*, and which she had built according to the Rule of blessed Columbanus with all care and devotion, and how many and how great miracles the Author of All Things deigned to show there for the encouragement of his female servants.

When Burgundofara, under the leadership of Christ, was maintaining a group⁶²² of many girls who had been united with her under the discipline of the Rule, at a certain time one of her nuns,⁶²³ called Sisetrudis, the cellarer of the monastery, had foreknowledge through a revelation of the end of her life, having been warned that she had a period of forty days⁶²⁴ in which to prepare for the journey, set right her character, and to amend her life. She is commanded to be ready in everything. Thirty-seven days passed dedicated entirely to religion:⁶²⁵ she wore out her body by fasting and praying with

618 Cf. *Life of Balthild* 10; *Life of Audoin*, prologue.

619 Eustasius died on 2 April 629. The phraseology reads like the closure of a book, and indeed some manuscripts contain the phrase *Explicit vita beati Eustasii abbatis* ('Here ends the Life of the blessed abbot Eustasius'), while one manuscript then adds the phrase *Incipit liber tertius* ('Here begins the third book'), while another has the phrase *Incipiunt miracula quae gesta sunt in monasterio virginum, quod est Evoriacas* ('Here begin the miracles which took place in the nunnery of Faremoutiers'). It is unclear whether these phrases suggest that there was once a three-book recension.

620 Chapters 11–22 are absent from the Metz manuscript. It would seem that while Jonas himself envisaged Book Two in the form published by Krusch, different communities edited it in ways to suit their own interests: see the argument of Rohr, 'Hagiographie als historische Quelle' (which, however, needs to be read together with Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*').

621 Jonas refers to his audience as readers. The scale of the *Life of Columbanus* makes it unlikely that it was ever intended to be read out loud, but Jonas's confirmation that it was a text for readers is striking.

622 The word used is *cohors*, and is an illustration of Jonas's employment of Christian military imagery. See nn. 146, 464, above.

623 *Subiecta*: suggesting a subordinate.

624 The length of time, reminiscent of Lent, is surely liturgically significant.

625 This is the beginning of a sequence of otherworldly episodes for which de Vogüé noted parallels in Book IV of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*. It would seem to be significant

floods of tears and by the labour of vigils so that she might more easily uncover the route of the forthcoming journey. Then two youths, swathed in white stoles, came and separated her soul from her body, and, bearing her through the empty air, they carry her to heaven, having subjected her to searching examination; and having placed her among the choirs of angels, and introduced her into the multitude of the blessed,⁶²⁶ they encourage her to seize joyful triumphs from the world. And when she was already secure in eternal bliss, exulting with great joy, having been placed among the choirs of virgins, and rejoiced, celebrating in the highest glory, and stood before the judgement seat of the Merciful Judge, she is ordered to be returned to her body and to return in three days. They [the angels] carry her back again to her body, commanding that she be in a state of greater preparation after three more days, so that the course of the forty days might be completed. Restored to her body, Sisetrudis calls the abbess and implores the whole company of female servants of God to offer her consolation in their prayers. She confides to them that a period of three more days of life has been allocated to her. And when the third day comes, she asks the mother to be present and she entreats everyone to await her death. Thus, with everyone present, hoping that she would not die, claiming that her body was healthy, and testifying that these things had not been said openly, Sisetrudis notices the two youths whom she has seen before coming towards her, and asking her if she still wished to go. And rejoicing, she says, 'I shall go now, my lords; I would go now and no longer be detained in this life full of troubles but return to that shining light from which I returned.'⁶²⁷ When asked by the mother Burgundofara to whom she was making such statements, she says: 'Don't you see the men dressed in stoles standing there, who bore me to heaven the day before yesterday, and are now ready to take me on the same journey once again?' Then, saying a last farewell to the amazed mother and all the bystanders, she was taken from this present life. Everyone present at her death hears all the choirs of angels singing and the sweet melodies drifting down from the sky, and all are struck simultaneously with fear and joy. And having left the cell which held her remains, as far as the human ear could reach they heard the angelic voices ever singing.⁶²⁸ This was the first encouragement of this monastery which the Lord wished to show to

that the parallels with the last book of the *Dialogues* should be confined largely to the Faremoutiers chapters.

626 *Candidati*: literally those clothed in white.

627 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 12 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 204).

628 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 16 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 210).

His female servants, so that the others, who were still alive, might aspire to religious worship with all their might.⁶²⁹

[II 12] The religious way of life of Gibitrudis and her death

Again, another act of encouragement happened after this. For a certain virgin called Gibitrudis, who was noble by birth and religion,⁶³⁰ sought to enter the same community, having turned away from the world. The mother of the monastery, Burgundofara, received her joyfully as a dear gift, for she was a close relative of hers. She had glowed with a fire of such brightness, that in all things the grace of the Holy Spirit was seen to burn in her. For when she was still detained in her parental home, she wished, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to dedicate herself to religious devotion, and she asked her father and mother to build her an oratory, where she could offer service to her Creator. But her parents bore this badly — for they were both noble Franks — as they were not striving to step onto the path that leads forward to the kingdom of heaven, but rather they desired to be elevated through worldly adornments. And for this reason they desired a child from their daughter, rather than to hand their offspring over to heaven. But when they were unable to change the girl's mind in any way from her purpose, they gave in to her wishes and built a very small oratory. As the girl frequented the place day and night, the cunning of the crafty enemy began to cast darts at her, and set about through her nurse⁶³¹ to prepare obstacles, and to prevent her from going to the oratory. But when the girl saw herself being tormented, she began to seek the mercy of her Creator. She prayed that the woman who prevented her from praying frequently, and wished to extinguish the light of her soul, should herself be deprived of external light.⁶³² Divine Piety did not delay! For soon, having been stuck down with a pain in her eyes, the nurse lost her vital sight. The Merciful Judge doubled the parents' anxiety and struck the father down with bouts of fever. However, her father, although inflated by

629 *Ad cultum religionis* is used here to mean the monastic life; see McNamara, 'Burgundofara, Abbess of Faremoutiers', p. 163 n. 25.

630 The same epithet applied to Berthoara in *VC* II: 10; cf. Flavia, *VC* I: 14.

631 McNamara ('Burgundofara, Abbess of Faremoutiers', p. 163 n. 26) suggests that *baiola* could be a poetic allusion to her mother. This is unnecessary: *baiolus* is a standard word for tutor or messenger and, as GB notes, Gregory of Tours, *LVP* VI, praef. (trans. James, p. 52) uses *baiola* to mean 'nurse'. It does not imply someone of the same social status as the mother.

632 Prayer for punishment of an adversary also appears in *VC* II: 9, 17.

his nobility, already aspired to the reverence for divine worship, following his daughter's example, and he asked his daughter to pray to the Lord for her father, and said that he was ready to follow her wishes in everything, if he was returned to health following her intercession. His cure was not long withheld from the faithful petitioner: the fever's fire was removed, and the father was soon restored to his former health: and then the girl asks if she can join the abovementioned monastery.

After she had been pursuing the religious life there for a great number of years, it happened that the aforementioned Burgundofara was struck with fever, and it was thought that she would be freed from the ties of this present life.⁶³³ Gibitrudis, seeing that the mother of the monastery was on the verge of death, having anxiously entered the basilica,⁶³⁴ implores the Lord with tearful voice to remember His ancient mercy and not to allow the mother to die until He had first received her and her companions in heaven: then, at last, He might command the mother to follow. And she hears a voice from above, after her tears, saying: 'Go, handmaid of Christ, what you asked for, you have obtained. She, unharmed, is still united with the living; you, however, will first be freed from the chains of the flesh.' Without much delay, Gibitrudis is seized with fever and, having passed her last hour, she gave up her soul. And now, having been taken up by angels, she was carried above the sky, and, placed before the tribunal of the Eternal Judge, as she later reported, she saw the company of the blessed⁶³⁵ and all the hosts of heaven standing before the glory of the Eternal Judge: and she hears a voice from the throne saying: 'Go back, for you have not completely left the world behind. For it is written: "Give, and it shall be given unto you", and elsewhere in the prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."⁶³⁶ But you have not forgiven your companions for everything, because you have remembered the injuries that were inflicted on you. Remember that you have held against three of your companions a spirit of resentment⁶³⁷ and that you did not entirely heal the whole of the

633 This may have been the occasion for Burgundofara's writing of her will, which survives. This can be dated to October 633 or 634: see Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare'; de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 207 n. 8; Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, p. 198.

634 This is henceforth called *ecclesia* or 'church'. Cf. *VC* I: 17. Jonas uses the terms *basilica*, *ecclesia*, *templum*, and *oratorium* interchangeably to mean 'church'. See de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 134 n. 16.

635 As in *VC*, II: 11.

636 Luke 6:38; Matthew 6:12.

637 As GC comments, *animi* here, and later on in the sentence, means 'feelings' rather than 'souls'.

wound that was inflicted with the remedy of forgiveness. Therefore, correct your behaviour, soothe feelings which you have hurt through laziness and negligence.' Wonderful to say, returning, and having been restored to her former life, she recounted with sad cries the sentence that had been passed, confesses her crime, calls the companions against whom she had borne hostile feelings, and asks their pardon lest, due to this silent deceit, she might incur the loss of eternal life. And for six months after her return to health, she lived in this present time. Then she was seized by fever, foretells the day of her death and announces the hour when she would leave the world.⁶³⁸ In this way she achieved a happy death, so that within the cell where her lifeless body lay you would have sworn that balsam was exuded.⁶³⁹ For all of us who were there at that time, this constituted a great miracle. Thirty days later when, according to ecclesiastical custom, we undertook to hold a commemoration and celebrated the solemnities of the Mass, so great a perfume filled the church that you would have sworn that the scents of all oils and spices were there.⁶⁴⁰ And rightly the Creator of Things makes the souls that have been consecrated to Him here – those who wished, on account of His love, in nowise to value and love the world – to shine with his gifts.⁶⁴¹

[II 13] The life and death of Ercantrudis

A certain girl of noble parents, named Ercantrudis, entered the religious life, and joined the monastery, while still an infant.⁶⁴² After she had followed the religious life there for many years, it happened that the Just Judge wished to test her by punishments of her earthly body. Her tender age sustained such great scourges, that you would think that the example of Job⁶⁴³ was

638 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* I: 8 (trans. Zimmerman, pp. 31–32).

639 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 15; 16; 17 (trans. Zimmerman, pp. 207–11).

640 Jonas was present at Gibitrudis's death at Faremoutiers in 634 or 635 and celebrated her Mass a month after her death. This tells us that Jonas had been ordained a priest and that he spent some time at Faremoutiers. We could also assume that he visited Luxeuil around this time. On the oils and spices released, see Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* III: 30 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 165).

641 Cf. the closing words of *VC* II: 6. For *rerum sator*, see *VC* II:11, 18.

642 Jonas may be deliberately distinguishing between her entry into the monastery and the fact that she was a *conversa*: it may be that some young inmates were merely educated at Faremoutiers, while others were already joining the sisterhood. On child oblation, see de Jong, *In Samuel's Image*.

643 Job provided the example of suffering in the Middle Ages. Jonas may well have

redounded in her, from the great number of harsh punishments. But wonderful patience was found in her youth, wonderful strength of humility, wonderful gentleness, wonderful piety, wonderful mildness, wonderful love!⁶⁴⁴ The strength of her soul prevailed in the flames of punishment, her faith remained firm, her goodness unchanged; her profusion of tears beyond compare. As much as the inflicted tortures hurt her body, so much did the hope of joys⁶⁴⁵ and the exultation of eternal life delight her soul. She was nurtured within the enclosure of the monastery, with so much care by the abbess, that she could by no means distinguish between the difference of the sexes; for she thought equally that male was female and female, male.⁶⁴⁶ Her fruitful⁶⁴⁷ behaviour, strength of patience, practice of piety, and state of gentleness was an example to all. Though she was pleasing to all, it happened that she once did something contrary to the tenor of the Rule. When she had been sentenced by the aforesaid mother, so that she might purge the guilt of her admitted crime up to the point that she had fulfilled the requirement of the penance imposed, she was deprived of the Lord's body.⁶⁴⁸ When she heard the sentence to deprive her of the Sacred Body, wounded by the heavy blows, she began to cry. For the following day was the holy solemnity of the

known Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job*, which was completed in c.591. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 193 n. 2 identifies a possible citation. This would not be surprising: there are more surviving Merovingian manuscripts and more citations in Merovingian texts of the *Moralia* than of any other work: see Wood, 'The Problem of Late Merovingian Culture'.

644 These virtues are the same as Jonas gave for Columbanus's first monastic community in Burgundy in *VC* I: 5.

645 *Spes gaudiorum*: Jonas echoes Romans 12:12 (*spes gaudentes*).

646 Jonas's choice of the word *mas/marem* for male caused problems for some copyists, who changed it to *matrem*, which is clearly not what Jonas intended. Cf. *VC* I: 2, on Columbanus's mother. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 210 n. 3 notes the parallel with *LVP* V: 5.21. The text in Ward's translation, p. 39 is as follows: 'They said of one of the hermits that he had initially gone up to Scetis taking his infant son with him. The boy was brought up among the monks and did not know what women were. When he became a man, the demons showed him visions of women at night. He told his father, and wondered what they were. Once they both went into Egypt and saw women. The son said, "Father, there are the people who came to me during the night in Scetis." His father said, "These are the monks of the world, my son. They wear one kind of dress, and monks of the desert another." The hermit was amazed that the demons had shown him visions of women in Scetis, and they both went straight back to their cell.'

647 Krusch in his apparatus suggests that *uberis conversatio* should be read as *uber conversatio*.

648 Cf. the *Life of the Jura Fathers* III 14 (151), where the abbot deprives a monk of receiving communion. For the punishment of nuns, see *Regula cuiusdam patris ad virgines* (which is usually attributed to Waldebert, but is ascribed to Jonas by Diem) 16–21.

death of the blessed bishop Martin.⁶⁴⁹ Keeping vigil that night and praying for the forgiveness of her offence, lest she might suffer the imposition of such a penalty as to be separated from the body of Christ due to her offence, she deserves at length after her tears, much sobbing and frequent sighs, to have the consolation of forgiveness from the Lord. 'Go', He says, 'and today be reconciled to the body of Christ, because the sin about which you have been praying has been forgiven you; and tell the mother, revealing what I have said.' In the morning, Ercantrudis revealed this to the mother in humble confession,⁶⁵⁰ and, having been reconciled to the Sacred Body, afterwards she pursued the religious life.

And after the course of many years when now the Creator of All wished to set her in heaven, He struck her with the fire of fever. When she was near to death, she says, 'Quickly, run, and segregate the dead woman and throw her out of the fellowship of the others. For it is not right that those who have been crucified to the world for Christ,⁶⁵¹ not living for themselves,⁶⁵² should keep among themselves a woman who is dead and segregated from life.' And while they all began to ask among themselves and wondered what she wishes to say, one of them, dismayed and struck with terror, prostrates herself on the ground, confesses her guilt, and promises to be corrected in all things. For, devoted to the world, longing for the secular life outside, she did not show any enthusiasm for mortification, but was living entirely for the world. After this, when black night had rushed in⁶⁵³ and held the world, the light having been driven away, Ercantrudis asked them to extinguish the light in the cell where she was lying. When the others asked what she meant, she says: 'Do you not see how much brightness is coming and do you not hear the choirs of singers?'⁶⁵⁴ When they asked what she heard them sing, she says: 'Praise the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for

649 The feast of St Martin, Martinmas, is celebrated on 11 November.

650 Cf. *VC* II: 19. The first confession of the day after the second hour in the dormitory is stipulated in the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 6; see also *Regula Donati* 19, 23, 41.

651 McNamara, 'Burgundofara, Abbess of Faremoutiers', p. 165 prefers 'crucified with the pure Christ', but notes that 'crucified to the world' could be an echo of Galatians 6:4. See also Columbanus, *Rule for Monks* IV (*SCO*, pp. 126–27).

652 As in *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 23. For prophecy at time of death, see also Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 27 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 222).

653 *Nox atra inruisset* may contain a literary reminiscence: the combination of *atra* and *nox*, and of *nox* and *ruit* are commonplace in poetry, though, as GB notes, the word order is usually *atra nox*. Cf. *atra nox inruerit* in *VC* II: 23.

654 Cf. *VC* II: 11; Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 12, 15 (trans. Zimmerman, pp. 204, 208).

ever. Praise the God of gods; for His mercy endureth for ever,⁶⁵⁵ and all the rest that follows, the mouths of all are singing.’ As they all were marvelling at this, making her last farewells⁶⁵⁶ to the mother and to her companions, she breathed out her spirit; after a happy death, she was returned to heaven, and she deserved to take possession of eternal joy and from the trials of this life to take the gains of eternal life.

[II 14] The death of Augnofledis and the angelic singing

Around the same time another virgin of Christ, called Augnofledis, while she was breathing her last, receiving in exchange for the punishment of this life the riches of eternal life,⁶⁵⁷ and in joy at being freed from the bonds of the flesh, merited at her exit from the world to have similar singing at the time of her death. The sisters who were at a distance from her deathbed⁶⁵⁸ clearly heard the singing of songs and voices breaking out in these phrases: ‘Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. To my hearing thou shalt give joy and gladness: and the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice.’⁶⁵⁹

[II 15] The death of Deurechilda⁶⁶⁰ and the opening of heaven

Since the Inventor of All Things⁶⁶¹ does not cease to increase, over the centuries, the splendour of His majesty through righteous souls, filled with the gift of innocence; evidently, in order to add reinforcement of religion through the renewal of exhortation, it happened that a certain adolescent named Deurechildis was converted [to the religious life] with her mother⁶⁶² at the abovementioned community. After many days had gone by in the monastery, the Tempter approached her mother so that

655 Psalms 135:1–2 (Vulgate).

656 As Sisetrudis in *VC* II: 11.

657 Jonas here repeats the same message as he concludes with in *VC* II: 13.

658 Cf. *VC* II: 17. Song heard by the sisters as in II:11.

659 Psalms 50:9–10 (Douay Rheims translation).

660 A variant reading adds *adulescentula*, ‘adolescent’: Krusch chose to confine it to the notes. Jonas is inconsistent in his spelling of Deurechilda/Deurechildis.

661 *Rerum repertor* as in *VC* II: 5.

662 As noted by McNamara, ‘Burgundofara, Abbess of Faremoutiers’, p. 166 n. 32, Deurechildis’s mother is called *genetrix* here so as to distinguish her from the Abbess Burgundofara who is called *mater*.

he might obstruct the path to the heavenly kingdom that had been taken. But whereas the mother, forced back by weakness, yielded to her fragile nature, the reproaches of her teenage daughter, on the contrary, destroyed the accumulation of evil. And when the adolescent's spirit, long devoted, had for many years already yielded abundant fruit to her Maker, on a certain day she saw the heavens opened, and, gazing, she contemplated the Eternal Author of All Things, and intent on the light of heavenly brightness she also deserved to hear: 'Come to us and freed from the bonds of the flesh receive eternal brightness.' And while those who were present wondered what was the truth of the matter, and what the eyes of the girl staring at heaven were looking at, for, from the movement of her eyelids, they had no understanding at all what her eyes were contemplating, she said that she had been called upwards, and had been loosed from the bonds of the present life. It was a Saturday. As the following day, a Sunday, dawned, seized by fever, the adolescent awaited her final departure. The anxious mother, seeing how close was the death of her only child, amidst sobs and moans asks her daughter that she [the mother] be rendered up to heaven, if she [the daughter] could obtain it.⁶⁶³ Or, if she is to complete the measure of her life, that she herself might be led from this life quickly after her, for she could not live after her death. Deurechildis says to her, 'You are being incited by worldly desires in repeatedly asking for these things, but I will support your wishes if I can.'⁶⁶⁴ Christ willing, I shall draw you after me, following the appropriate penitential medicine.' Without delay, in her final hour, she asks for the mother of the monastery to come quickly. And when the hastening abbess had arrived to do the last honours for a soul departing from the world,⁶⁶⁵ having seen her the exultant girl is glad, and she commends her mother to her and to all, bidding farewell. In addition, she asks them to remain silent. And while they all silently waited for her soul to depart, she says: 'Make room, my Creator is coming to me, my Saviour is hurrying to me',⁶⁶⁶

663 *Superis datur*: rendered up to heaven: we have followed ML in taking *superi* to mean 'those above', i.e. in heaven, although the word in Jonas usually means 'those remaining' or 'the living'. If one takes Jonas's standard meaning of *superi*, the phrase would mean that the mother 'begs her daughter with sobs and groans to return to the living'.

664 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 14 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 207), where Galla asks that Benedicta come after her.

665 If this refers to the giving of the viaticum one would have expected the rite to have been performed by a priest and not the abbess.

666 Similar to Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 17 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 211), where Tarsilla says, 'Get back! Get back! Jesus comes.'

and tells the abbess⁶⁶⁷ to help her say the Lord's Prayer and the Creed,⁶⁶⁸ because she was unable to express the words steadily, as her lips were trembling. When this was done, the little cell was filled with great pleasantness and light, and she returned her soul to its Creator rejoicing. And immediately her mother was struck down, and for forty days her body was tormented.⁶⁶⁹ Once this forty-day period had been completed she was initially terrified by the terrible appearances of demons, but then she was consoled by the might of the Liberal Giver. And she said that she had won her forgiveness through her daughter's intercession, and she returned her soul, freed from the bonds of the flesh, to heaven. And so it can be understood that the one who was not strong enough by her own merits to avoid the destructions of the world, was found worthy to be saved by repentance through punishments inflicted for a short while, as a result of the intervention of her daughter.

[II 16] Domma and the two young girls and the beam of light seen shining in her mouth

If we include those things which help in the progress and advancement of the perfect or even for the correction of sinners, by no means let anyone judge that we have compiled unnecessary things.⁶⁷⁰ For there is no doubt that the losses experienced by others render many more vigilant by prompting them towards the rewards to be gained.

One Sunday, Burgundofara, whom we have often mentioned, was awaiting [the conclusion of] Mass with the company⁶⁷¹ of the female servants of God, and they had already partaken in the communion of the

667 The word used is *mater*, which, to avoid confusion, we have translated as 'abbess'. Throughout this chapter Jonas uses the word *genetrix* to identify the mother of Deurechilda.

668 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 213 n. 8 notes that at the final benediction of the day (called *pax* in Columbanus, *Communal Rule XIV* (*SCO*, pp. 144–45)), one said the Creed and the Lord's Prayer (*Antiphonary of Bangor* 35–36, ed. Warren, p. 21). See also Fructuosus, *Regula* 1.

669 Again, the number 40 has echoes of Lent. Cf. *VC* II: 10, 11. In Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 14.4–5 Benedicta follows Galla after only thirty days.

670 Jonas is anticipating possible criticisms from his detractors as in *VC* I: 15; II: 25.

671 The term *collegium* is used by Jonas in referring to the Columbanians and also by Desiderius of Cahors (*Ep.* I: 10) to describe the aristocratic court group influenced by Columbanian ideals at Paris: see the comment on *VC* I: 30, above. It does not mean, *contra* McNamara, 'Burgundofara, Abbess of Faremoutiers', p. 167 n. 33, that they were acting as 'an official chapter of canonesses'.

Sacred Body. One of them named Domma, when she had already taken the Lord's body and drunk His blood,⁶⁷² having joined the holy choir, sang with her companions: 'Receive this Sacred Body of the Lord and the blood of the Saviour in eternal life.'⁶⁷³ A fiery globe flashed in her mouth, glowing with a clear radiance. But while the brightness of the fire was noticed by none of those standing by, two infant girls standing close at hand, whom innocence had rendered pure, saw rays shining with extraordinary brightness from the mouth of the woman during the singing of the chant.⁶⁷⁴ Not knowing at all to keep silent, looking in wonder, they began to say: 'See! See the shining globe glowing from Domma's mouth!' When the mother heard this, she sternly ordered them to keep quiet, so that the sin of pride should not cast a shadow – as in fact happened – over the heart of her through whose mouth an outpouring of grace shed the beautiful light.⁶⁷⁵ But Domma's mind, corrupted by its frailty, after these rewards of the Holy Spirit began to love the excitements of arrogance and pride, and to fall into the sin of obstinacy,⁶⁷⁶ and to prefer the haughtiness of pride, so that she scorned the mother, looked down on her companions, and shunned the warnings of all. Without delay she was seized with fever, and brought to the point of death, but she made no attempt to reform. One of those girls⁶⁷⁷ who had seen these things, however, Ansitrudis by name, was struck with a headache, and the other with fever, and both were brought to the point of death and awaited their end.⁶⁷⁸ And when

672 In the early Middle Ages, as in the Anglican Church, communion was taken in both kinds: bread and wine.

673 This is the Antiphon at communion *Ad communicare* found in the *Antiphonary of Bangor* 112 (ed. Warren, p. 31). It shows the continued liturgical influence of Columbanus and the monastic practices of his home monastery of Bangor within the Columbanian monastic network.

674 Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogues* II: 2, also relates how during Mass a globe of fire was seen over the head of St Martin and which was seen by only five people in the crowd: de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 215 n. 3.

675 Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogues* I: 10 where an abbot castigates two children who have performed a miracle to drive away the sin of vanity. Cf. Gregory of Tours, *DLH* IV: 34 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 228–29); de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 215 n. 4.

676 Cf. Columbanus, *Rule for Monks* I: *contumaciae crimen incurrit* (SCO, pp. 122–25).

677 We have ignored Krusch's curious reading of *hae vero qui viderant*, where the *hae* is feminine and the *qui* masculine plural, especially as the correct *quae* is attested in some manuscripts.

678 McNamara, 'Burgundofara, Abbess of Faremoutiers', p. 168 n. 35 notes that Jonas's use of pronouns is problematic in what follows. The singing and the perfume seem to be associated with only one of the girls, but both call on the abbess.

the group of their companions⁶⁷⁹ were already present and had prepared themselves to sing the office for their death, one of them started to sing with a pious mouth songs that had not been heard by human ears,⁶⁸⁰ and sweet harmonies, and to beg the Creator with marvellous phrases, prayers unheard, ineffable sacraments, and at the same time a perfume of amazing sweetness filled the cell. It was the ninth hour of the day when the most sweet perfume filled the cell. The perfume of balsam burned from her breast⁶⁸¹ so that for the whole of the following night and day, until the ninth hour, both the sweetness of the scent and the modulation of chant continued.⁶⁸² Then they ask the mother to sing, and they foretell their imminent death, and, then when the spirit had departed from them, the smell of fragrance receded with their deaths. This thing is surely to be believed beyond all doubt: that the aforesaid Domma would have had the glory of this good death, which these two girls merited to have, if she had not lost it through the vice of pride and arrogance.

[II 17] Wilsindana, her prophecy, and the angelic singing

Thereafter other encouragements of glory were added to these in the aforementioned monastery, so that, through the manifestation of divine piety, the rewards of eternal life might be loved more richly. A certain woman of Saxon origin, Willeluinda,⁶⁸³ was converted to the religious

679 Again, Jonas uses the word *cohors*: see nn. 146, 464, 622, above.

680 Cf. 1 Corinthians 2:11. Supernatural knowledge given to dying, as in Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 27 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 220); de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 216 n. 6.

681 Cf. *VC* I: 12. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 15; 17; de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 215 n. 8.

682 The odour and singing are both found in Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 16 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 210).

683 Wolfgang Haubrichs informs us that the name is best reconstructed as Willeluinda, and that Wilsindana (like Leudebertana) is a Romance form (see n. 457, above). Willeluinda is a West Germanic name (unlike the East Germanic Sisetrudis, Gibitrudis, and Athala). It is, therefore, an appropriate name for a Saxon. The name-form, however, does not allow her to be identified as either Continental Saxon or Anglo-Saxon. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 216 n. 1 suggests she was a woman from Saxon Germany rather than Anglo-Saxon England, though this seems unlikely, given the fact that Saxony was still pagan. Krusch's preference for an Anglo-Saxon origin can be supported by Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* III: 8, on Anglo-Saxon women entering monasteries in Gaul, which explicitly mentions Faremoutiers. If she were not an Anglo-Saxon, she could have come from one of the Saxon communities settled in Francia, and mentioned by Gregory of Tours (*DLH* X: 9; trans. Thorpe, pp. 556–57).

life in that monastery. She had spent many years in the religious life there when, one day while working in the garden within the monastic enclosure, she said to her companions: ‘Soon one of us cultivating the vegetables in this plot will be going away, and she should prepare herself, lest the negligence of indifference cause the loss of eternal life.’⁶⁸⁴ When they sought to know who it would be, she refused to reveal the answer. But before long she herself was struck by infirmity of the body. And, while she was troubled by various pains, she began to turn her happy face to heaven, and to relate pages of Scripture long unknown to her.⁶⁸⁵ Starting from the beginning, she recited the books of Moses in order, and then she remembered all the Scriptures in order, and, after the teachings of the ancients, she recited the vital and apostolic sacraments of the Gospels. And at the same time, so that those remaining behind should not be overcome with sorrow, she said that the Lord would swiftly take vengeance on their enemies, and that he would give her⁶⁸⁶ this promised consolation. For there was an enemy of the monastery called Aega, a man pre-eminent in the world, to whom the dying Dagobert had entrusted his son Clovis, together with the kingdom.⁶⁸⁷ He was opposed to the aforesaid monastery, violated its boundaries, and persecuted its dependants in the surrounding district on whatever pretext he could.⁶⁸⁸ But he did not long enjoy the designs of the pertinacity on which he had embarked, because shortly after the promise of revenge, he was struck dead.⁶⁸⁹ Then Willeluinda

684 ML notes that *ne ... pariat damna vitae aeternae* should mean ‘lest it give rise to the punishments of eternal life’. Because *vita aeterna* would seem to be a positive phrase, we have chosen to understand *damna* as ‘loss’, as in *VC* II: 12.

685 Esoteric knowledge given to the dying as in *VC* II: 16.

686 As ML notes, *sibi* (in classical Latin, ‘to himself’) can be used for *ei* (‘to him/her’) or for *eis* (‘to them’) in medieval Latin: see Stotz, *Handbuch* IV, p. 294.

687 Fredegar IV: 79 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 67). Dagobert I died on 16 January 639. He appointed the Neustrian mayor of the palace, Aega, regent, who ruled the kingdom on behalf of his infant son, Clovis II, with Dagobert’s dowager queen Nantechildis. Fredegar (IV: 80, trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 68) gives a mostly positive impression of Aega, although he notes that he had a tendency to be avaricious. He was clearly a powerful enemy for the Faremoutiers community.

688 The two families of Aega and the Faronids were probably feuding. According to Fredegar IV: 83 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 70–71), Aega’s son in law Ermenfred killed Count Chainulf, who might be associated with Chagnulf, Chagneric’s son, and brother of Burgundofara.

689 Aega died at the royal court outside Paris, Clichy, at the beginning of 642, some days after Ermenfred killed Count Chainulf. See the comments in the introduction, section 6, above.

began to sing with sweet melodies, prayers, and supplications, and all that the offices of the priests bring forth. When those who were standing by were profoundly amazed at this, she addresses one of the bystanders: 'Throw her out! Out the door! Throw out rubbish!' And when the others asked what she means, she says: 'Don't you see with how much filth she has filled her mind, and how she has not attempted in any way to purge by means of confession the filthy area of her heart, which she polluted with all kinds of dirt while still in the world, before she was enclosed here?'⁶⁹⁰ Struck with fear, overcome with shame, and seized by the light of the Holy Spirit, the one to whom such things were said prostrated herself on the ground, and revealed her hidden vices to the mother in confession. After this she who was hoping to depart from this life started to ask that, having made some space, they provide room to those who were arriving. When they had complied, she says with happy face and inclined head: 'Bless, my ladies, bless, my ladies.'⁶⁹¹ When those who were present asked whom she was greeting, Willesuinda replies: 'Don't you see your sisters who have departed from your company to heaven?'⁶⁹² When they asked her if she recognized any of them, she says in a rebuking tone to one of them called Ansetrudis: 'Do you not recognize your sister Ansildis who went to heaven a short while ago and who has now joined the choir of the blessed?' Saying this, her soul escaped from her body, and, having departed, the angelic singing was soon heard in the air.⁶⁹³ Even some of those who had gone far from the cell in which the lifeless body was lying, having heard the company of angels resounding and singing through the air, knew for certain from this song that Willesuinda had been freed from the bonds of the flesh.⁶⁹⁴ Running, they found her lifeless limbs, and the company of the sisters carrying out the offices of the dead, and they understood that the singing of psalms they had heard resounding through the air had been a supplement to her funeral rites.

690 Cf. *VC* II: 13.

691 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 18 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 212), where Musa lowers her eyes and says to the Virgin Mary, 'Here I am, my Lady, I come': de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 218 n. 9.

692 Cf. *VC* II: 11, 13. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 12 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 204).

693 Angelic singing, as in *VC* II: 11, 14; cf. II: 13.

694 In Cologne, Severinus learnt from the singing of the angels, who brought the saint to heaven, that St Martin had died: Gregory of Tours, *LVM* I: 4 (trans. Van Dam, pp. 206–07).

[II 18] Leudebertana⁶⁹⁵ and the vision of blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles

After these things, His abounding goodness again heaped up additions to His gifts and He did not delay strengthening another virgin, called Leudeberta, with salutary warnings and proofs of heavenly origin. For after she had pursued the holy life in this same monastery for some length of time, He did not refrain from warning her in her sleep to make herself more ready for the end of her life, and when she had relaxed her limbs in sleep, a voice said to her that she should in no way deviate from the aforesaid mother's teachings, because she would soon be separated from the living. Nor did the kind Liberal Giver delay for long to increase the gift of his promised offering. Leudeberta was struck with sickness and openly embarked on her ultimate departure. When both the mother and her companions were already present to perform the last rites, suddenly, after a long silence, she begins to speak and says: 'At what hour, glorious Peter, prince of the Apostles, do you want us to go?' And when the others wanted to know what she was doing, she says: 'Do you not see your patron, the prince of the Apostles, standing among you and wishing to lead me from this life?'⁶⁹⁶ No sooner had she managed to say this when, her joyful countenance looks around at everyone,⁶⁹⁷ she breathed her last breath, and, leaving the air of this world, she was borne to everlasting joys. Thus the Creator of All Things, after a long silence, allowed her tongue to speak in a voice full of tears,⁶⁹⁸ so that she might persuade others to follow the example of her life, and He revealed the great quantity of His gifts to the living, gifts with which He does not cease to enrich those leaving from this light in His fear and love.

695 Wolfgang Haubrichs explains that Leudebertana is a Romance form of the name Leudeberta (see n. 458, above).

696 St Peter was the patron of Faremoutiers, as he was many other Columbanian foundations, including Luxeuil and Bobbio. Cf. his role in Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 12; 14 (trans. Zimmerman, pp. 204, 206), where he visits the nun Galla: de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 219 n. 2.

697 At first sight, Krusch's text, *laetus omnes circumexpectat vultus*, looks odd, because *laetus* must refer to Leudeberta, for whom one would expect a feminine adjective (*laeta*). Krusch himself proposed *laetis omnes circumspectat vultibus* as an alternative. Following GB, we have added the word 'her', so the *laetus* naturally goes with *vultus*.

698 For *flebilibus vocibus* meaning with 'tearful voice', see *VC* II: 12.

[II 19] The punishment of the wrongdoers and the damnation of the fugitives⁶⁹⁹

The wickedness of diabolic deception, however, blazed up against this people of Christ.⁷⁰⁰ As he [the devil] saw them increase in virtue, he approached to sully by temptations some of them who were less sophisticated on account of the newness of their conversion, and he tried to pluck them from the company of the others, and tempted them to violate the confines of the monastery. He threw them headlong into desiring the deadly life of the world and wishing, like dogs, to eat again their own vomit.⁷⁰¹ When, in the dark shadows and the silence of the pitch-black night,⁷⁰² they had already sought to put their foolish plan into practice,⁷⁰³ and were trying to leap over the enclosure of the monastery with the use of a ladder,⁷⁰⁴ suddenly a fiery mass like a cylinder came from the middle of the dormitory, and filled and lit up the whole building.⁷⁰⁵ It then separated into three spheres and went through the passages of the gates with a great noise of thunder. The building had a number of gates, through which the fire bore its globes. The noise of thunder wakened the sleepers,⁷⁰⁶ and brought correction to those who were leaving the monastic enclosure. When already the feet of some of them had crossed the perimeter,⁷⁰⁷ terrified by such noise they wished to move back into the enclosure, but, as though they had been weighed down with lead, they were powerless to go back. For the Devil, with what skill he could, tried to harm those whom divine punishment would by no means allow to perish. Thus confounded, they acknowledged their sins and, having turned back, they reveal them to the mother in confession.

699 See Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, p. 157.

700 Cf. *VC* II: 15; II: 1. For a discussion of this chapter, see Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, p. 201.

701 Cf. *VC* II: 13; Proverbs 26:11.

702 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 220 n. 3 notes an echo of Cassian, *Institutes*, IV: 6; *Life of the Jura Fathers*, II, 6, 79–81 (trans. Vivian, pp. 139–40).

703 These must be the novices of the second sentence.

704 The archaeology from Hamage shows that the monastic enclosure consisted of a deep ditch and a wooden palisade (Louis, 'Hamage: Le monastère du haut Moyen Âge'). The nuns would have used the ladder to scale the palisade and then used the rungs of the ladder to cross the ditch.

705 Cf. events at Remiremont in *VC* II: 10.

706 Cf. also *Regula ad virgines* 14, to nuns sleeping two in a bed.

707 *Vallum*: this is probably a palisade, as in the translations of de Vogüé and McNamara. Columbanus, *Communal Rule VIII (SCO, pp. 142–43)*, speaks of *claustra*.

Having attacked, next the Ancient Serpent moved to tempt two others, whom the monastic life was rendering more inexperienced and much more foolish,⁷⁰⁸ initially that they would in no way make a true oral confession. For it was the custom of the monastery and of the Rule that each of them should purge her mind through confession three times a day, so that whatever stain the mind had attracted by its frailty, righteous exposure would wash it away.⁷⁰⁹ The devil's arrows had plunged the minds of the aforementioned girls into this ruin, so that no true confession either of what they had done in the world, or of what daily fragility had attracted in thought, word, and deed, was forthcoming from their mouths, nor could true confession return them to health again through the medicine of penance. When the Deadly Serpent had poured in its venom little by little by making their hearts stubborn, and had discovered that their minds, deceived by his wickedness, were obedient to himself, he assailed them, so that they took flight one night, having left the enclosure of the monastery, wishing to return to their homes. When they set out into the thick night,⁷¹⁰ they were unable to find the way at all because of the thickness of the fog, but the devil stood at their left hand, and, with the art of which he was capable, simulated a light in the form of a lamp, and showed the path leading back to the world, and increased their strength by his cunning. Once they had arrived at their destination, with people following in search of them, with no one standing in their way they return to the aforesaid monastery with a crestfallen look. When they had returned, following an examination as to the reason that had compelled them to leave, they answered that they had been driven outside by the darts of the devil and that their minds were totally unable to take direction. When these women were for a long time reproached by all the community, and the censure of all had no effect on them, both were struck with divine punishment, and they learnt to undergo the punishments they deserved. And when the anxious mother of the monastery frequently asked what was the cause of the punishment, neither was at all capable of telling the truth, though she warned them repeatedly to reveal their crime in confession in their final hours. But since their stubborn hearts had no

708 *Adgressus deinceps alias duas antiquus anguis, quas noviores et multo imbecilliores conversatio reddebat, temptare compulit.* Jonas's meaning here is confusing, because he is looking both back to the previous paragraph, and forwards to the escape of the novices.

709 The practice of confession several times a day was a Columbanian tradition: *Communal Rule* 1 (SCO, pp. 142–43); *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 6; *Regula Donati* 19, 23, 41.

710 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 221 n. 7, noted an echo of Cassian, *Institutes*, IV: 6: *densissimas tenebras nocte.*

wish to reach for a cure, they began to cry out in their torments: 'Hold back for a little, hold back; do not urge on those who wait!' When the others asked whom they were begging to hold back, they say: 'Don't you see that horde of advancing Ethiopians who want to seize us and carry us off?'⁷¹¹ While everyone there was amazed at these terrible words, they hear a noise resounding above the cell roof,⁷¹² and the door of the cell burst open with force, so that they could discern black shadows standing there, and they heard voices repeatedly calling them by name, so that those present, though armed with the sign of the cross,⁷¹³ and concentrating on singing the psalms, were hardly able to stand. In this happening of such sorrow and grief, the mother urges them to reveal their vices through confession, and to be strengthened by the communion of the Sacred Body. But, having heard mention of the Sacred Body, they begin to jabber and gnash their teeth, and to scream: 'Tomorrow, tomorrow!'⁷¹⁴ and meanwhile to repeat their previous words, 'Wait, wait, hold back a little, hold back!'⁷¹⁵ While they were saying this, they breathed their last.

As the mother of the monastery could by no means think it right to bury them in the company of the others, she orders them to be buried separately, at a remote distance from [the communal cemetery]. During the next three years,⁷¹⁶ a ball of fire like a disk often appeared over their graves, and it shone more strongly especially in the forty days leading to the beginning of Holy Easter or on Christmas Eve, when numerous voices of a tumultuous crowd also resounded. Among these voices, two burst out shrieking as voices scream in torment: 'Alas for me! Alas for me!'⁷¹⁷ Therefore the mother of the monastery, seeing that the just sentence had been inflicted on the unjust souls by the Just Judge, set out to discover the sentence of the damned women more clearly. Coming to the grave, she seeks by investigation to

711 As noted by de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 222 n. 8, this is modelled on Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 19 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 213), although the Ethiopians are not present in this account.

712 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* III: 30 (trans. Zimmerman, pp. 164–65), on the noise of the Devil on the roof of an Arian church.

713 Cf. *VC* I: 8.

714 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 222 n. 11 notes that 'Cras, cras' is the cry of the sinner: Augustine, *Ennarationes in Psalmos*, 102; Caesarius, *Sermons*, 18 and 20.

715 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 40 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 246).

716 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 33 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 230), where the tomb of a sinner burns for a long time until all the bones are incinerated; de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 223 n. 13.

717 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 56 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 265).

see whether the corpses remain in the grave, however much they were corrupted with putrefaction. Six months had already passed since their dead bodies had been buried there: she finds that the inside of the grave had been completely burnt with fire on the inside, and that nothing of the corpses remained in the earth, but the trace of ashes.⁷¹⁸ The severity of the sentence that had been imposed lasted for three years so that the terror of the damned should strike fear into their remaining companions, and so that salvation might be spread by the religion and zeal of action of the living, as a result of the punishments imposed on the dead, whether destroyed by negligence, lukewarmness, or rather stubbornness of mind.⁷¹⁹

[II 20] The death of Landeberga and the angelic singing

After a space of time the solaces of consolation continued. For while a certain virgin named Landeberga was waiting to pass the final hours of her present life, oppressed by the entire weight of her anxieties, and stung by the strong pricks of her wrongdoings,⁷²⁰ she was awaiting only the consolation of departure from life. When her calling⁷²¹ came through the silent night, all those committed to watching the sick woman, overcome with tiredness, snatched some sleep, and only one woman, called Gernomeda, exhausted with illness, remained vigilant among her companions. So when, as we have said, she was awaiting the final end, a dense cloud, suffused in some measure with a golden glow, covered the bed,⁷²² and at the same time voices were heard singing and exulting: 'Let us sing to the Lord, for He is gloriously magnified.'⁷²³ As soon as Gernomeda heard the voices of the singers resound, she began anxiously to rouse her companions. But as she could in no way wake anyone, she attentively awaits the end of the event, and after a little while she sees the cloud rise from the bed, and at the same time the soul was taken from the body. When the cloud had been raised up on high and her ears no longer heard the singing voices,⁷²⁴ then at last the

718 Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 53, 56 (trans. Zimmerman, pp. 263, 265).

719 Cf. *VC* I: 2; II: 8.

720 As Albrecht Diem notes, the *phrase validis ictuata dolorum stimulis* contains the word *dolus* ('crime'), and not *dolor* ('grief').

721 *Vocatio*: cf. *VC* I: 17; II: 10.

722 Exodus 14:19–20; cf. *VC* II: 25.

723 Exodus 15:1.

724 Cf. *VC* II: 11; also Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 16 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 210), where Romula's soul is conducted to heaven and where the singing gradually diminishes as the soul rises in the air.

sick woman succeeded in waking her companions, and told them to offer the songs owed to the dead. She herself was seized with the severe blows of fever for seven days, and she ended her life on the eighth day.⁷²⁵

[II 21] The overflow of oil and the transformation of water

After this the Creator of Goodness and of Gifts did not delay in distributing the gifts of His goodness again. For a certain girl called Bithildis was converted to the religious life while she was in her adolescence in the abovementioned monastery. When she had long been rendered immovable by the reins of the regular discipline,⁷²⁶ and longed with desire for her heavenly rewards, it happened that the Just Judge wanted to set the just soul filled with its just rewards in heaven.⁷²⁷ When, already near to death, she asked that a light be lit beside her during the following nights,⁷²⁸ and that the text of the holy Scriptures be read to her,⁷²⁹ and one of the nuns who attended her had refilled a certain lamp with oil and water, sleep overwhelmed all of them. Thus the hours of the night passed, and the sick woman spent the night without the solace of her companions. Then, with the half-light of the dawn coming on apace, when they had sung the morning Lauds to the Lord, the one who had filled the lamp with oil and water saw that the liquid had changed into milk,⁷³⁰ and she sought to know whether any of her companions had changed this. They say to her: 'Don't you know that there is no milk here?'⁷³¹ Then the sick woman replies: 'Don't waste your mind on this task, and refrain from enquiring about it.' Since they were more eager to know, they call the mother, and

725 Cf. *VC* II: 15 and Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* I: 8 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 32), where successive monks die and one a week later after asking Anastasius that he too could follow them.

726 *Habenis*: cf. *VC* I: 9; II: 1.

727 Cf. *VC* II: 13, 19, 22. The laboured word-play is in Jonas's Latin.

728 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 225 n. 3 notes the parallel with Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* IV: 14 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 206), where the widow Galla insists on having candles lighted during the night.

729 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 225 n. 4 compares continuous reading of Scriptures in Baudonivia, *Life of Radegund* 8–9 and *Life of Caesarius* I: 45.

730 Water in a lamp changed into oil in Jerusalem: Rufinus, *Church History* VI:9, and at Ancona in Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* I: 5 (trans. Zimmerman, p. 25): see de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 225 n. 5.

731 Does this imply that the dietary regulations at Faremoutiers restricted milk? For eating restrictions, see *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 10.

tell her what had happened. Burgundofara, in order to examine it more carefully, orders the oil to be separated from the milk. When they had separated the oil, and nothing resembling milk remained, the oil once again began to increase and to flow more plentifully from the vessel.⁷³² Then those present recognized the power of God; they collected the oil with all devotion and placed it carefully in the sanctuary.⁷³³ Burgundofaro, bishop of the city of Meaux,⁷³⁴ and Waldebert, abbot of the monastery of Luxeuil, were witnesses to this. Some sick women were restored to pristine health when treated with this oil.⁷³⁵ As for Bithildis, she was filled with all joy, and happily awaited her end.⁷³⁶ When she had given her soul back to heaven, such sweetness of smell filled the cell that you would have thought that she sweated balsam there. For why was it that He transformed His creation of water into the appearance of milk, and commanded the oil to increase to the point of overflowing,⁷³⁷ except that Divine Mercy wished to show others how Divine Clemency visited the sick woman on that night? And while she had not wished to tell her companions what she had seen,⁷³⁸ the Almighty left a trace of His power and His visit.

[II 22] The beast seen in the transgression of dietary rules

While we have not omitted to hand down to posterity the gifts of great things conveyed for the exertion of merit and religious devotion, we likewise consider it right to tell about something that we have found beneficial

732 De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 225 n. 6 notes the same miracle in Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogues* III: 3.

733 McNamara, 'Burgundofara, Abbess of Faremoutiers', p. 174 n. 44 suggests sanctuary or ambry: for *sacrarium*, Niermeyer offers church, holy place, sanctuary, sacristy, wardrobe, treasury.

734 Brother of Burgundofara and successor of Gondoald as bishop of Meaux. Cf. *VC* II: 7. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 226 n. 8 suggests that Burgundofaro and Waldebert were probably not yet bishop or abbot at the time of the miracle, but were when they were sent to teach the nuns the rule in the early days of the foundation of Faremoutiers.

735 Cf. *VC* II: 8, 23. Cf. Mark 6:13; John 5:14.

736 Cf. *VC* II: 12, 16.

737 The change to milk only in appearance mirrors the Antiochene influenced exegesis of Augustinus Hibernicus, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae* (*On the Miracles of Sacred Scripture*), and suggests Jonas's awareness of Irish exegetical traditions, as the literal and rational Antiochene method was more favoured by Irish exegetes than the more allegorical Alexandrian method of Origen.

738 Cf. *VC* II: 23, 25. See also II.2, and n. 10.

in inducing terror in a hard and ignoble mind.⁷³⁹ A certain noble girl⁷⁴⁰ came to the abovementioned monastery to submit her neck to the regular discipline.⁷⁴¹ But the Ancient Serpent, setting out to pluck her, intent as she was on the religious devotion of a good life, from paradise, through the sin of disobedience, aroused in her a lust for food, so that she came to satiate her hunger with secret eating.⁷⁴² For a long while she committed the crime without being caught, for it was entirely unknown to her companions. When therefore the avidity of her greed had stained her soul for a long time, the Just Judge passed His just sentence on the unjust soul.⁷⁴³ He chastised her very serious crime with a more burdensome punishment. He caused her exhausted body to have a hatred of the food that was permitted, and her troubled mind was unable to eat anything other than husks of grain, leaves, and a mixture of wild herbs.⁷⁴⁴ When this vengeance had already for many days weighed on the soul misled by disobedience, at mealtime, when she asked for the abovementioned food to be brought to her, she saw the image of a large boar eating with her, and sniffing its food in the manner of a filthy pig, with a grunt. Terrified, she asked what it was. The beast replied: 'I am what I am. The food which you ate thus in disobedience up to now, I have eaten with you, and from this time forward know that you will have this food for the course of a year.' Her food remained the same for the course of a year, and she ate nothing but the husks of grain, the leaves of trees and wild herbs, and the liquid left over from the dregs of beer.⁷⁴⁵ Why was it that this frail mind, aware of her wretched disobedience, was reproached by the diabolic voice, unless the savagery of present pain might keep her soul from being damned later to agonies?⁷⁴⁶ Divine Piety wished to show the improper acts of the one who agreed, through him through

739 Cf. the 'prologue' to *VC* I: 1; II: 16.

740 Like Gibitrudis and Ercantrudis: *VC* II: 12, 13. Significantly, Jonas does not name the sinner in this instance.

741 Cf. *habenis* in *VC* II: 1.

742 Cf. Genesis 3:1–24. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 227 n. 4; cf. *Lives of the Fathers of Merida* II: 6 (trans. Fear, p. 73), on the Ancient Serpent.

743 Cf. *VC* II: 19, 21, 22. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 227 n. 5 compares Sisebut, *Life of Desiderius*, 6: *illam iniuste iustam et iuste dicam iniustam*. For the sentence of the Just Judge, see *VC* II: 10.

744 Cf. the punishment of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:12–30. The whole sequence, however, sounds like a genuine description of an eating disorder, providing a plausible description of a 'binge/fast' cycle.

745 Evidence that there was brewing and nuns drank beer.

746 For the salutary intervention of Satan, cf. 1 Corinthians 5:5.

whom the disobedience had been propagated. Thus He revealed to whose evil persuasions she, long deceived, had been subservient, that she might learn through the punishments imposed that a creature ought not to obey the Devil, but the Creator.

Likewise, when another girl, Beractrudis by name, had long lived as a nun in the community, and yet never made any attempt to keep the precepts of regular discipline, the Devil cast into her mind, corrupted by disobedience, the idea that whatever she could pillage by theft she might eat in secret. And when she had polluted her soul for a long time in disobedience, the Just Judge gave her just punishment. She was seized with a burning fever, and in its fires began to shout: 'Alas for me!'⁷⁴⁷ After these shouts, she lay senseless, so that she was believed by all to be dead. When after a space of many hours she breathed, she began to cry out: 'Let the mother come! Let the mother come!'⁷⁴⁸ Those who were present hurriedly went and call mother Burgundofara. When Beractrudis saw her, in all earnestness she sets out in confession the heap of all her sins.⁷⁴⁹ When all those present were awaiting her death, she improved and made a recovery. Afterwards she remained in this life for a little while, under the reproof of fever, and so, at length, came to the end of her life.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁷ Cf. *VC* II: 19.

⁷⁴⁸ Cf. *VC* I: 17; II: 11, 15.

⁷⁴⁹ Cf. *VC* II: 19.

⁷⁵⁰ An edition of Bede's works printed in Basel in 1563 (Krusch, *Jonae Vitae Sanctorum*, p. 140) provides a short account of Burgundofara's death, which Krusch (pp. 279–80) confines to a note, as being spurious, even though the text is presented as being by the author of the previous chapters. Clearly the paragraph is not part of the original composition. Giving Jonas's unwillingness, stated in the letter to Waldebert and Bobolenus, to write about the living, the absence of any significant comment on Burgundofara as abbess suggests that she was still alive when he wrote the *VC*. We may, therefore, guess that she was living in 642/43. She was, however, dead before 664, when her successor as abbess died (Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, p. 212): it is, therefore, possible that Jonas added the section, though this seems unlikely, given its peculiar survival (outside the manuscripts of the *VC*). The text is as follows: 'After numerous holy women living under the rule of the blessed Burgundofara had departed this corruptible life in diverse and disparate deaths, as we have said, according to the quality of their good deeds, their venerable mother, in a worthy heavenly calling, after she had ruled the aforesaid community of Evoriacum extremely well for many years, struck down with an infirmity of the body, herself reached her final day on the third of April, and was received into the crowds of virgins, who follow the Lamb, wherever he goes, that is the heavenly bridegroom, our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns as God through all ages. Amen. The End of the Life of the abbess, saint Burgundofara.'

[II 23] The Life of Abbot Bertulf

How notable are the monuments of the just the community of the learned⁷⁵¹ strives to declare to posterity through the hardships of this life. Therefore, we should by no means omit, as if lethargic with the quiet sleep of negligence, what is now known to have taken place in our time. Just as the examples of our predecessors produce zeal for religion more fruitfully among us, so after a while the gains achieved in our times may bear fruit for posterity. And while we promote things worthy of imitation for others, we may more often place things worthy of remembrance in front of ourselves.⁷⁵²

For we should not fail to commit to memory who and how great was the venerable Bertulf, head⁷⁵³ of the monastery of Bobbio, whom we have previously mentioned.⁷⁵⁴ But first his conversion to the monastic life from the world should be related. He was of noble, albeit barbarian,⁷⁵⁵ origin and a relative of blessed Arnulf, bishop of the city of Metz.⁷⁵⁶ When he saw the aforesaid bishop Arnulf yearning for the practice of religion⁷⁵⁷

751 *Doctorum ordo*; cf. *VC* I: 1.

752 Jonas is perhaps implying by this statement that notable deeds have been forgotten within the Columbanian communities.

753 It is worth noting that Jonas does not use the term *abbas* here for Bertulf whereas he did use this for Eustasius as the abbot of Luxeuil.

754 Mentioned in the letter to Waldebert and Bobolenus as the one who commissioned Jonas to write the *VC*.

755 In *VV* 7, *gentilis* means 'pagan', which is a standard meaning of the word in early Christian Latin. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 229 n. 3 noted that in Jerome, *Life of Paul* 6, the word means 'foreigner' or 'barbarian'. In later medieval Latin the word comes to mean 'belonging to a nobleman, refined, handsome' (see Niermeyer). It is difficult to understand what is intended here. It would seem unlikely that a high-ranking Merovingian aristocrat of the early seventh century was a pagan, but Jonas seems to be modifying *nobilis*. Like de Vogüé we have opted for 'barbarian'.

756 Arnulf was *domesticus* of Theudebert II of Austrasia, and as such joined Pippin I in ensuring Chlothar II's takeover of the kingdom in 613. Thereafter he abandoned the secular life, becoming bishop of Metz between 614 and 629, but subsequently living an eremitic life, although he continued to influence the court of Dagobert I. He died in 640. He was later regarded as an ancestor of the Carolingian family (although this is not explicitly stated in sources earlier than the eighth century). Krusch, *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum*, p. 280 n. 3 considered that Jonas's chronology here was faulty, apparently on the grounds that he thought that Bertulf was copying Arnulf's eremitic career, which only began at the time of Bertulf's death. Jonas does not actually say that he was copying his entry into the desert, merely his rejection of the *infulas pompas saeculi*, which is surely no more than his secular career.

757 *Ad cultum religionis* as in *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* 1; cf. *VC* I: 10; de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 229 n. 5.

and zeal for the religious life, after the honours and insignia of court and the pomp of this world, he too strove to desire the things of heaven by trampling earthly things under foot. He set aside his father, the land of his birth, and the pomps of the world, following the command of the Gospel. After getting rid of his goods, naked, he followed Christ by taking up the Cross and denying himself for His sake.⁷⁵⁸ He attached himself to bishop Arnulf and stayed with him for a little while.⁷⁵⁹ Then he went on to the venerable man Eustasius at Luxeuil⁷⁶⁰ where he remained for a long time, pleasing to all, subjecting himself to the holy Rule⁷⁶¹ and religious observance. Then, with the arrival of the blessed Athala from the regions of Italy,⁷⁶² when the venerable man⁷⁶³ was willingly joined to the society of Eustasius in the bond of peace,⁷⁶⁴ because they were of one heart and one spirit, there was no discord between them when, between themselves, they exchanged those subject to them by mutual agreement. He, therefore, set out in the footsteps of venerable Athala, and was received into the bosom of Italy, and remained in the monastery of Bobbio under obedience to blessed Athala. When the Creator of all took the aforesaid father Athala to the heavenly kingdom after the labours of this world, the whole assembly of monks united in voice and mind cried out: 'We raise Bertulf to the paternal dignity.'⁷⁶⁵ For thirteen years he did not cease to teach his congregation with the zeal of all diligence, and to instill in them salutary advice. But what he did during this time ought to be passed on to memory.

⁷⁵⁸ Matthew 10:37–40.

⁷⁵⁹ Although Krusch thought that Jonas implied that he stayed with Arnulf after he relinquished the episcopate, this must have happened while he was still in Metz.

⁷⁶⁰ Eustasius died in 629, the same year that Arnulf retired to the monastery of Remiremont.

⁷⁶¹ On the *sancta regula* and the significance of this terminology, see Diem, 'Inventing the Holy Rule: Some Observations on the History of Monastic Normative Observance in the Early Medieval West'.

⁷⁶² Jonas always refers to Italy with the archaic term *Ausonia*. Cf. Prologue 4. De Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 97 n. 15 suggests a Virgilian allusion.

⁷⁶³ This would seem to be Athala.

⁷⁶⁴ Jonas's account is unclear. Athala had been in charge of Luxeuil after the exile of Columbanus, as is clear from *Ep. IV* (*SCO*, pp. 26–37). Jonas, however, seems to be referring to a moment after the death of Columbanus, by which time Athala was already established at Bobbio. There seems to be a suggestion that there had been some disagreement between Luxeuil and Bobbio, which was patched up during a visit of Athala, and that the new unity was marked by a transfer of monks, which Jonas apparently felt he had to explain.

⁷⁶⁵ Abbatial election: *Rule of Benedict* 64; also, Columbanus, *Ep. IV*: 9 (*SCO*, pp. 34–37).

When he was ruling the community with distinguished character, goodness, and discipline, guided by true knowledge,⁷⁶⁶ the Ancient Serpent began to vex the quiet mind with the blow of adversity. He incited a certain Probus, bishop of the city of Tortona, who tried with all his power to make the aforesaid abbot, together with the monastery, subject to him. First, having approached courtiers and neighbouring bishops, he tempted them with bribes, and when he rejoiced in having them on his side, through their good offices he went to persuade the king. At that time Ariowald ruled over the Lombards.⁷⁶⁷ But when they received nothing from the king in reply, except that they should prove whether monasteries situated far from cities ought to be subject to episcopal rule by ecclesiastical law, Probus joins all whom he could to his plan. And when these things were taking place, one of the courtiers secretly sent to tell the aforesaid Bertulf what was brewing. Bertulf sent messengers to the king to find out whether this was the case, to which Ariowald replied: 'It is not for me to judge in ecclesiastical cases which a synodal trial ought to bring to a resolution.' They asked whether he was a supporter of their case. He said that he did not at all support those who wished to raise difficulties against the servant of God. And when they saw that such things were being said, albeit by a barbarian and a believer of the Arian heresy, they ask to be supported at public expense⁷⁶⁸ so that they can go to the apostolic seat in Rome. Therefore, with this favour having been granted, the aforesaid abbot, in whose entourage I was present, set out for Rome in royal style, and came to Pope Honorius.⁷⁶⁹ When Bertulf had explained the case to the Pope, the Pope diligently inquired what the custom of regular discipline might be. And when Bertulf had readily explained everything to the ears of the bishop, the regular order, the religious observance, and evidence of humility were pleasing to blessed Honorius. He kept Bertulf for a little while and strove to encourage him with daily words of advice, so that he might not forsake the hardship of the way he had set out on, and might not cease to strike the treachery of the Arian disease with the sword of the Gospel.⁷⁷⁰ Honorius was a venerable

766 Taking the reading *moderante*, rather than *moderantem*, as chosen by Krusch.

767 Ariowald was king of the Lombards from 626 to 636. Like most of his predecessors, he was an Arian. He had been an enemy of Bobbio earlier. See *VC* II: 24.

768 This may suggest some continuing state transport system (*cursus publicus*) derived from the Roman world.

769 Honorius I, pope from 625 to 638.

770 The papacy was constantly attempting to challenge Lombard Arianism and also to forestall any Lombard military threat against Rome.

bishop, wise in mind, energetic in council, renowned in doctrine, a man full of charm and humility. He was delighted to have found an ally for those in need, from whom he gained sweet information, but he did not enjoy this for long, since he was soon separated from his company. But since the severe heat of summer did not allow a long period of relaxation, Honorius provided the desired boon, and he granted a privilege of the apostolic see, which specified that no bishop should attempt to exercise control over the aforesaid monastery by whatever right.⁷⁷¹

Having received the hoped-for gift, we set out to return home. But when we had covered a good part of our journey, and had left the fields of Tuscany behind, and reached the countryside of the Apennines and had come to the vicinity of the fortress known as Bismantova,⁷⁷² such a severe fever overwhelmed Bertulf that it was thought without question that he would be overtaken by death. For he was already ill when we had left the City. Both the sorrows of such a long journey, and the struggle of the sick father, weighed heavily on all of us, nor did anyone at all have any hope for his recovery. When the tent had been pitched in a harsh place, oppressed by sorrow on every side, and not all confident that the father would recover, we were afraid. It was then the vigil of the feast of the martyrdom of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul.⁷⁷³ And as black night rushed in,⁷⁷⁴ while in the flames of his fever, he sent for me, and, his mind given over to cares, he asked me about the nocturnal vigils. And when I told him that everything had been arranged, he says: 'Keep watch in front of my bed for the whole length of the night, until the dawn breaks into day.' And when I had lain down, as the dead of night came, so great a sleep weighed on me that I was unable to lift up my head, and all who were watching the baggage or horses by the tent were likewise overcome by sleep. When silence had covered everything, the blessed prince of the apostles Peter came and stood over the bed of the sick abbot. 'Get up', he says, 'and help your companions.' And when Bertulf asked him who he was, he replies: 'Peter. Today my famous

771 Honorius granted Bobbio a privilege on 11 June 628: *Codice diplomatico del monastero*, I, pp. 100–03. This was to become a model for subsequent papal privileges: see *Liber Diurnus* 77. See Anton, *Studien zu den Klosterprivilegien der Päpste im frühen Mittelalter*; Wood, 'Jonas, the Merovingians and Pope Honorius: *Diplomata* and the *Vita Columbani*'. See the translation in the Appendix below.

772 Near Modena.

773 29 June.

774 *Atra nox intruerit* may contain a literary reminiscence; cf. *nox atra intruisset* in *VC* II: 13. See n. 653, above.

solemnities are celebrated throughout the world.’ After saying this, he left. Bertulf was struck with fear and attempted to ask me, with anxious and fearful heart, what was the reason for what had happened. For he thought I had heard the voice and seen the apparition. And when I said that I had heard and seen nothing, he says: ‘Did you not see the golden light in which the apostle Peter left?’ And when I said that I had seen nothing, he fell silent. When I understood the cause of what had happened, I was scarcely able to get him by my prayers to tell me the truth about it. He would have remained completely silent had he not thought that I had heard and seen it.

When on one occasion, after the office of Psalms, Bertulf together with the brothers left the church of the blessed Peter at the second hour of the day,⁷⁷⁵ they met a man called Viaturinus who was filled with demonic madness. Seeing him, Bertulf looked to heaven and asked the Creator to come and favour his prayer, and heal the sick man from the demon’s plague in response to his prayers.⁷⁷⁶ Then Bertulf commanded that the force of the demon should quickly leave the man, and never again presume to stain the image of God. Creeping away miserably,⁷⁷⁷ the evil sickness fled from the man, and immediately health returned.⁷⁷⁸ Cured, the man left the church with the brothers and, remaining in health, he gave thanks to the Creator, who had relieved his pain, thus quickly showing favour to His servant in answering his prayers.

Then, after some time, someone else, a small child named Domnicus, the son of a certain man called Urbanus, was oppressed with a savage plague of a demon, and hastened to him for the favour of a cure. After reproaching the demon for a long time, Bertulf cured the boy, and made the savage plague depart from him.⁷⁷⁹

Then, another miracle followed. A certain leper, riddled with leprosy,⁷⁸⁰

775 This is now back in Bobbio. The monastic church was dedicated to St Peter as were the majority of Columbanian foundations in Gaul. The office at the second hour is Prime and was at 6 a.m.; see Stevenson, ‘The Monastic Rules of Columbanus’, pp. 209–10. There were eight offices in the Columbanian Rule.

776 Eyes raised to heaven as in *VC* I: 15 22.

777 Following ML we have translated *disserpando*, which is attested in the manuscripts, rather than Krusch’s reading of *discerpendo*.

778 Cf. *VC* I: 21, 25.

779 As ML has noted, we have emended the Latin from *et seva peste exire ab hominem fecit* (which seems to be nonsensical) to *et sevam pestem exire ab homine fecit*.

780 This may not have been ‘Hansen’s disease’, which is what is commonly called leprosy nowadays, but was scarcely known in western Europe in the early Middle Ages: see Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, pp. 47–50, 73–74. Moore notes that references to

and certain that he would not recover his health from doctors, came to the venerable man, Bertulf, and asked that he might merit the help of mercy through his prayers. When the man [Bertulf], full of faith, saw that he was subject to most severe torment, he sighed and ordered him to remain with him until he recovered his health. He took care that his mind, conscious of miracles, penetrating heaven, might incite the Creator of things to respond to his prayers. He fasted for two days, then poured oil over the man's limbs covered in ulcers. Soon, the limbs learned to recover health after the putrefaction of the flesh within, and returned once again to their former beauty. Thus, the sick man was cured and no trace of the leprosy was visible on his body. And so the Creator of All helped by showing favour to His servants, so that, strengthened more fully by the power of miracles, they might trample on passing vanities and might always strive to fulfill the commands of heaven.⁷⁸¹

[II 24] The avenging of the monk against the Arians

We know from experience that the miracles of many monks shine forth and therefore we think it right to set down some examples of them. One time when Blidulf the priest, whom we have mentioned above,⁷⁸² had been sent by blessed Athala to the city of Pavia and had arrived there,⁷⁸³ he was walking along the street in the centre of the city when he met Ariowald, duke of the Lombards, a most noble man, son-in-law of Agilulf, and a relative of Adalwald.⁷⁸⁴ He was a believer in the Arian heresy, who after

leprosy in the period are almost non-existent, apart from the laws on lepers ('de lebroso' and 'puella lebroso') in the *Edictum Rothari*, 176, 180, ed. Azzara and Gasparri, *Le leggi dei Longobardi*, pp. 54–57. It is worth noting, however, the chronological proximity of the Edict (issued 643) to the abbacy of Bertulf (626–39).

781 This is the end of the account of the life of Bertulf: one manuscript marks the fact with the statement, 'Subsequently the holy father Bertulf, having completed the thirteenth year of his religious authority, migrated to Christ, famous for his virtues and renowned for his miracles.'

782 Blidulf was one of Jonas's two companions on his return home to Susa to see his mother: *VC* II: 5.

783 Pavia was one of the Lombard capitals: see Christie, *The Lombards*, pp. 146–47. It is worth noting that this whole chapter, although placed in the section devoted to Bertulf, actually concerns the abbacy of Athala.

784 Jonas seems to have forgotten that he has already mentioned Ariowald in *VC* II: 23 in the context of the dispute over bishop Probus of Tortona. Before becoming king, he had been duke of Turin (Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards* IV: 41). He married Gundeperga, the daughter of King Agilulf (590–616), and was thus brother-in-law of Agilulf's son,

Adalwald's death assumed the rulership of the Lombard kingdom. When Ariowald had seen Blidulf, he says: 'He is one of Columbanus's monks, and he refuses to make appropriate response to our greetings.' And when he was not so far off, Ariowald greeted him derisively. To this Blidulf says: 'I would wish⁷⁸⁵ for your greeting, if you did not favour your seducers and beliefs alien to the truth. Those whom you have thus far called priests have falsely taken that name for themselves. Further, it is better to confess the ineffable Trinity as one God, not three powers, but three persons, nor one person with three names, but three persons in the truth of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with one power, will, and substance.'⁷⁸⁶ Ariowald listened to this for a little while, then went on his way, and asks why he did not have servants of such cruelty who, under cover of darkness, would attack the monk as he returned, beat him with clubs and staves, and hand him over to death. Then one, more depraved than the others, says that he was prepared to carry it out if he gives the order. To speak the truth, Ariowald says: 'If you do this, I will enrich you with gifts the next day.' Therefore, the man sets out, having found for himself a like-minded companion in crime, and watches over the route as dark night fell. The monk and priest⁷⁸⁷ was taking the same road, returning from a dinner to which he had been invited by a certain Christian, when he unexpectedly came upon the henchmen. The monk, having been repeatedly hit on the head and struck on every part of his body, died, having been beaten savagely with the blows of clubs and by staves. None of the people knew about this, for it was an out of the way place, and he was unable to cry out because he was prevented by the lethal blows. Then, leaving, as they thought, a corpse that had long been lifeless, they go and announce to the author of the crime that the deed had been carried out. And when the man at whose house he was lodging saw that the priest and monk was delayed, not knowing what had happened – for he himself was a priest called Iustus – he was afraid that he might have run into Arians.

Adalwald (616–626), who was a Catholic. On Agilulf, the king who granted Columbanus the site of Bobbio, see *VC* I: 30.

785 The Latin has *optabam*, which means 'I was hoping'. This scarcely makes sense in the context: following ML we have translated *optarem*.

786 Drawing on Columbanus, *Sermon* I: 2 (*SCO*, pp. 60–61): *Deum ... unum potentia, trinum persona, unum natura, trinum nomine* ('God ... one in power, three in person; one in nature, three in name').

787 This appears to be one person: the ensuing verbs are in the third person singular, and there is only one victim in the story.

Snatching his staff, Iustus follows the route for a little way and finds the man lying there as if he had fallen into a deep sleep. He tries to wake him. Blidulf rises uninjured, as if from his bed, with hardly a trace of the blows visible, and together they return to the lodging. On being asked what had happened, Blidulf replies that 'nothing so pleasant had ever happened to me', and swears that he has never had such a sweet sleep. His companion asks him if pain is afflicting any of his limbs. Blidulf replies that he has never been healthier and is unaware that anything bad had happened to him. Having completed his business, he returns to the monastery. But the man who had volunteered to perform the deed is seized by a demon soon after the departure of the monk from Pavia and, tormented by the fire of diverse punishments, confesses that he has carried out the deadly crime. He shouts out to all the people, that whoever did such things as he had done against the monks of Bobbio will be subject to similar vengeance, and whoever gives in to the arguments of the Arians will feel the same wrath of the Just Judge. The wretched Ariowald, seeing that the crime had been divinely exposed, is confused and fearful lest something similar happen to him. He sends the man whom the horrid force was tormenting, together with his companions, to blessed Athala, and begs for himself that the abbot forgive the evil committed, and that he was prepared to be of great service to them, if they are willing to accept his gifts.⁷⁸⁸ The blessed Athala, seeing that the injuries of his monk's limbs had been divinely avenged, asks that all pray for the wretch, so that the force of the adverse power might be driven from the unhappy man. As for the gifts of the impious and heretical man, he replies that he will never for all time accept them.⁷⁸⁹ Therefore for the time being the Lord responded to the prayers of all. Having been restored to health, the man returned home cured, but he did not enjoy the riches of life for long. When he had returned to his home, and was reproached by others about why he had done this, he replies in an insolent voice that he had done it of his own free will. What other reason do they want? Immediately the man was seized with the fire of fever and, screaming in the torments of the flames, he was deprived of life. No one dared to bury him near the tombs of others, but they buried

⁷⁸⁸ This would prove to be the case after he became king and aided Abbot Bertulf on his journey to Rome (*VC* II: 23).

⁷⁸⁹ Columbanus refused to accept gifts of Theuderic II in *VC* I: 19, where he cites Sirach 34:23 'gifts of the impious'. Bertulf was less intransigent when he accepted help for his journey to Rome in 628 from Ariowald, who was then king, but still Arian (*VC* II: 23).

him far from all in a certain clearly visible place⁷⁹⁰ where those passing by were wont to say: 'Here that wretch lies buried, who, due to his own wantonness, acted cruelly against a monk of Bobbio.'

[II 25] The monk Meroveus, the vengeance taken for him, and the death of the monks Agibodus, Theudoald, Baudacharius, and Leubardus

Around the same time another monk called Meroveus⁷⁹¹ was sent by the blessed Athala to the city of Tortona. He arrived there, and, because of the business on which he had been sent, he went some distance out of the city to a certain villa by the river Staffora, in which, as he came closer, he noticed a shrine amongst the trees.⁷⁹² He gathered together a pile of wood in the form of a pyre and bringing fire set it alight. Seeing this, the worshippers at the shrine seize Meroveus, and after having beaten him for a long time with sticks and struck him with blows, they try to drown him in the river Staffora. But the water did not dare to receive the monk although

790 We find the same practice at Faremoutiers with the intransigent nuns (*VC* II: 19). It was common, later, to bury criminals at crossroads, which seems to have been intended to place the bodies outside normal society: Gordon and Marshall, *The Place of the Dead*, p. 7. For the likelihood of the practice being earlier, see Reynolds, *Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs*, p. 52.

791 The name Meroveus is interesting: the name appears to have been used exclusively by members of the eponymous Merovingian dynasty, and even there it was not a common name. See s.v. Meroveus in the Nomen et Gens online database: <http://www.neg.uni-tuebingen.de/?q=database>. One of the sons of Theuderic II, Merovech, was spared by Chlothar II in 613 because he was his godfather (his other brothers were killed). Fredegar IV: 42 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 35) notes that he was sent in secrecy to Neustria under the protection of Count Ingobad where he lived 'for some years'. It is tempting to associate this monk of Bobbio with the son of Theuderic II. Chlothar II may later have thought it more prudent to send him to Bobbio (cf. *VC* I: 30 for Chlothar's embassy to Bobbio).

792 One should not make much of the paganism of the Lombards presented here. The anecdote should certainly be understood as a hagiographical topos, which, as GB notes, is exemplified in Sulpicius Severus, *Life of Martin* 13 (trans. Hoare, p. 26). Although there was doubtless some survival of traditional religious practice in seventh-century Italy (see, for instance, Gregory the Great, *Register* XI: 56), it was probably not significant. The *fanum* is as likely to have been a surviving Roman building as a new Lombard shrine. Historians have made rather too much of the continuation of paganism among the Lombards, picking up on every possible reference to Woden, and pointing to the snake cult mentioned in the *Life of Barbatus of Benevento*, though that cult can be traced to the period long before the Lombard arrival, being associated with the ancient *Marsi*: see Wood, 'Giovardi, MS Verolensis 1, Arichis and Mercurius', p. 208 n. 105.

he was entirely prepared to die for such a cause. And when they saw that they could not drown a man whom the mercy of God protected, they had a stupid debate among themselves. They throw Meroveus into the water and then pile wood on top of him, so that the heavy weight may push him beneath the waves. When they think that this crime has been accomplished, they return to their homes, leaving behind what they think to be a corpse. When they had left, Meroveus, feeling nothing from the assault, rises unharmed from the river, and, having broken his bonds, returns safely to Tortona and afterwards goes back to the monastery. Once Meroveus had left, divine retribution soon struck those involved. For all those who had been party to perpetrating this deed were struck with diverse afflictions: blindness affected some, a burning fire others, contraction of the knees others, and yet others a debility in all their limbs, different individuals receiving diverse torments. But after they had discovered that Meroveus had returned safely to Bobbio, some of the sick among them were taken there. While a few of them escaped through the medicines of penance, all the rest died in the same retribution. The Creator of All Things lavishes wonderful gifts on His servants, since, after harm done to the flesh and injuries sustained by the body, He both gives strength through support in this life, and after its battles He especially glorifies with coronation in the future those whom He sees receive injury of their own accord for His name.

We have seen⁷⁹³ the completion of a happy life and an even happier death of monks of the aforesaid monastery of Bobbio, who departing from this life have left diverse examples for the encouragement of those still alive. From these some should be set down so that the encouragement to the living and those imitating their lives might increase. For, at one time, when a certain monk named Agibodus, whom we have already mentioned,⁷⁹⁴ who was in charge of the mill of the monastery at the time of blessed Athala, was awaiting the hour of his death, placed in a state of extreme anxiety, and when the crowd of brothers was already present to pay final honours to the soul leaving the world, and were preparing themselves as was the custom for singing the office of the Psalms, Agibodus's soul left his body and saw eternal light that was prepared for him and the sun shining in golden splendour. When he beheld this and exclaimed that he had never before seen such a sun or brightness that could equal it, one of the inhabitants of

793 It is possible that the word *vidimus* here and in the account of the death of Theudoald implies that Jonas himself was present, as he certainly was on the second occasion.

794 *VC* II: 2.

heaven comes to him and asks him why he was looking on astonished, and he replies that he was amazed at the radiance of the sun and that he had never seen anything like it. The other says: 'Know that this day you will come to us and will be an inhabitant of this golden light, and having been placed in the choir of the just will be seven times more resplendent than this sun.'⁷⁹⁵ Go back, bid farewell to the company of your brothers and so then come back to us.' His soul returned to his body and he says his last farewell to all. When one of those standing by asked why he had remained so long uncertain of his departure, he explains the reason for this, what he had seen, and he reported how much glory had been promised to him, and he announces that he would depart that hour, having returned to take the last rites, and to bid farewell to the brothers. And when he had partaken of the holy body of the Lord, he gave the kiss of peace to all, and asks them to carry out the office of charity for his body. The end soon fulfilled the promise, and having died a good death, he left only longing to the living. The Reward-Giver to the saints only wished to leave this for posterity as an example, so that those who were aware that Agibodus's crown had been promised before his death might be imitators of his purity and religion in all things. For he had been brought up since his boyhood under the norms of the regular discipline, having turned away from the world under blessed Columbanus. He was considered to be guileless and to possess every goodness among the brothers, mighty in obedience and religion, but like a child, as the Gospel says, in [being without] malice.⁷⁹⁶ For why was it that the most merciful Creator of All wished to show him what he would be like afterwards as he was leaving the world, except that those here who live a life of similar simplicity and subject themselves voluntarily to obedience and mortification might look forward to a similar reward and might acquire the glory of eternal light?

We saw another man, called Theudoald, alike in obedience, piety, and gentleness, separated happily from this present life, and hasten to eternal joys with all gladness and delight. For as he lay happily on his bed, he asks that all come, and says his last farewell to everyone as that very hour he would leave his body. But how he had foreseen his death he had no wish at all to tell us. And when he had said farewell to everyone, he asked for the viaticum, and having received it, he himself began the antiphon, saying: 'The saints will go from virtue to virtue: the God of gods shall be seen in

⁷⁹⁵ GB notes a reference to Isaiah 30:26.

⁷⁹⁶ 1 Corinthians 14:20. Jonas's Latin is excessively concise here.

Sion.⁷⁹⁷ Once the melody of the antiphon had been finished, happily, and filled with every pleasantness, he returned his soul to the Giver, so that we who were standing by⁷⁹⁸ were given to understand clearly that he was filled with joy by the glory he had seen and the promise of a reward.

Another monk under Abbot Bertulf named Baudacharius was ordered at the time of the grape-harvest to protect the vines lest an incursion of birds or beasts cause damage. It happened that thirty brothers came to defend the same vineyard. He, full with love, asks that they may refresh their tired limbs there after their labour, but he had nothing other than a little bread, which he had brought for his own use. When the overseer reproached him, telling him not to continue with this intention, because he was unable to supply bread, he says: 'I have a great banquet with me, from which many and more can be satisfied.' When the overseer asked what it was, he says a bird, which had been given him by the Lord, which the people call a duck because it swims.⁷⁹⁹ The overseer says, 'As you have made the request, provide the food for the brothers.' He set to work, and divided the food between the thirty, and thus all were satisfied, so that they said that they had scarcely ever eaten so much. Faith increased the banquet with more, because they did not have anything.

Again, when on another occasion he had been deputed to look after the vines, another monk called Leubardus found a little fox devouring the grapes. He rebuked it with threats not to touch them again, and forbade this by command. And when he had gone away, the wild animal, being accustomed to live by theft, came to the food, and when he had taken it, holding the prohibited food in its mouth, it died. Soon Leubardus, zealously going round around the vineyard, found the dead fox holding the prohibited food in its mouth.

On another occasion the same Leubardus together with Meroveus, whom we have already mentioned, were widening the enclosure of the vineyard, and strengthening it on the abbot's orders. It happened that they cut down a tree with an axe and widened the fence from the pile of branches. And when they had stripped the branches from the trunk, they came to a decision to prostrate themselves on the ground, to ask God to increase their strength, so that they could transport the complete tree trunk to the fence. When they had arisen from prayer, they grab hold of the tree

797 Psalms 83:8.

798 Jonas was, therefore, definitely present on this occasion.

799 The etymology *anas a nando* may have been taken from Isidore, *Etymologies* XII: 7.51, though Krusch, *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum*, p. 293 n. 1 also suggested Varro as a source.

while invoking the sacred name of Almighty God, and try to carry it to the intended spot. And what many could hardly have dragged to the place, two men, armed with faith, carried easily. Afterwards, many brothers, who had been sent together at the same time, tried to move it, and when they were unable to lift it, they then eventually acknowledge the miracle of the Almighty. The miracle each of the two had secretly made known to the rest at the same time, when they returned, neither ascribing it to himself, but to the other.

But perhaps someone judges and condemns us, reproving us and attacking us for including such things. We, however, do not know how to be silent about those things, which belong to divine glory. Let each judge for himself whether these gifts of the Creator are either meet to be received by him who denies them, or rejected by him who does not believe in the miracles of this faith which have been performed.

[AMEN]

JONAS, *THE LIFE OF JOHN*

HERE BEGINS THE LIFE OF SAINT JOHN, MONK AND ABBOT

In the one hundredth year after the completion of the calculation¹ of the holy bishop Victorius, which began another [Easter] cycle,² in the third year of the young lord Chlothar, of regal character,³ when, in the second

1 The word used is *numerus*, 'number'.

2 Victorius of Aquitaine is not referred to as bishop elsewhere. In 457, in Rome, he produced his Easter cycle (*Cursus Paschalis*) (ed. Mommsen, *Chronica Minora* 1, and Krusch, 'Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie: II', pp. 16–52 [the standard edition of Victorius's Paschal cycle]): this determined the date of Easter up to 559 AD (or 532 years after the date of the Passion, which Victorius thought to be AM (*anno mundi*, 'the year of the world'), which corresponds to 28 AD). A further hundred years after the conclusion of Victorius' table takes us to 659. Subsequent Easter dates were deduced from his calculations, which superseded previous computistical tables, although these continued to be used in Ireland, where Columbanus was familiar with them. See Blackburn and Holford-Strevens, *The Oxford Companion to the Year*, p. 809. Columbanus firmly rejected the Victorian calendar. A new calendar was drawn up by Dionysius Exiguus in 525. Although this would become the standard calendar over time, its adoption was slow, even by the papacy, and the chronology of its adoption is remarkably difficult to establish. This reference to Victorius suggests that Réomé was still following the Victorian and not the Dionysian calendar in 659. Although some have assumed that the Columbanian houses adopted the Dionysian calendar in or shortly after 627, this is only an assumption. Since the abbot of Réomé in 659, Hunna, came from Luxeuil, it is likely that the Columbanian houses in Gaul were also following the Victorian calendar at that time. On the calculation of Easter at Luxeuil, see Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions*, esp. pp. 51–55. Our thanks to ML for tightening up the translation and the note.

3 Chlothar III was born in 652, and ruled as king of Neustro-Burgundy from 657 to 673, although the author seems deliberately to call him *princeps* rather than *rex*. He was seven years old at the time of the composition of the *VJ*. If Jonas was abbot of Marchiennes at the time, the visit to Chlothar's court may be of significance. The Austrasian *maior palatii*, the head of the government, Grimoald, had seized power in c.656, exiling the legitimate Merovingian king Dagobert II and appointing Chilbert 'the Adopted' in his place. Grimoald, however, was soon overthrown, although the exact date is uncertain: Chilbert

week of the ninth month,⁴ abbot Jonas,⁵ en route to the city of Chalon-sur-Saône on the orders of the king⁶ himself and his mother, the eminent lady queen Balthild,⁷ was passing the monastery of saint John at Réomé,⁸ he rested there for a few days because of the strain of the journey, and when, overcome by the prayers of the brothers of the community to transform what had been learnt from the disciples of the aforesaid confessor and their successors about his active life into this spiritual contemplation,⁹ in a connected narrative,¹⁰ the aforesaid Jonas addressed abbot Chunna.¹¹

may have survived to 662. There is still no agreement over the exact course of events, but the full range of evidence is set out in J.-M. Picard, 'Church and Politics in the Seventh Century: The Irish Exile of Dagobert II'. For some unknown reason, Jonas, whose monastery was probably in Austrasia, was being summoned to the Neustro-Burgundian court during or immediately after the period of Grimoald's usurpation.

4 According to Krusch, November and not September.

5 Crucially for our understanding of Jonas's later life, he is here described as abbot. He himself does not appear to be the author of this first preface.

6 The word used is *princeps*, not *rex*.

7 Balthild, widow of Clovis II: notable for her championing of monastic reform, but also remembered as a tyrannical figure, who was responsible for the deaths of several bishops: Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History'. For Balthild's monastic policy, see Ewig, 'Das Privileg des Bischofs Berthefried von Amiens für Corbie und die Klosterpolitik der Königin Balthild'.

8 Interestingly, Jonas himself never names the community, but simply describes it as being outside Semur-en-Auxois (chapter 2).

9 The author of this first preface thus sees the work not as a *vita* but as *spiritualis contemplatio*, a description which best fits chapters 16 and 18. This is central to the reading of Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul'. For John, see *PCBE* IV, 2, pp. 1056–60.

10 GC suggests that *articulo dicendi* ('by the connection of speaking') implies a transformation of a collection of stories or sayings into a coherent narrative.

11 Chunna appears as a member of the monastery of Luxeuil, under abbot Waldbert, in Bobolenus's *Life of Germanus of Grandval* (*Vita Germani Grandivalensis*) 6. The fact that Chunna himself came from Luxeuil may explain Jonas's decision to stop at Réomé. Whether Jonas's visit to Réomé (and Chunna's position as abbot) should be seen as indicating that the monastery of John became 'Columbanian' has been debated: Dubreucq, 'Lérins et la Bourgondie dans le haut Moyen Âge', pp. 210–12 has stressed that the association between Luxeuil and Réomé can be overstated.

THE PREFACE OF THE LIFE OF THE BLESSED JOHN, MONK AND ABBOT

Following the outstanding examples of the saints, which illuminate the world¹² more brightly than light, both by verbal teaching and by setting out an example, we ought absolutely to declare and to lay them open to all, with all zeal and with all endeavour, when they have been uncovered, to summon both the minds of men attached to celestial desires and even the souls of the simple, [men being profane,]¹³ to eternal life, so that, while we consider with thoughtful¹⁴ focus of mind the labours, the zeal of repentance, and the example of mortification of earlier Church leaders,¹⁵ monks, and fathers, we stimulate both our hearts and the minds of others to imitate them, in so far as we strive to study the consolation of doctrine and the addition of works, with Christ's help. Their virtues and religious deeds are deservedly sustained¹⁶ by Christian praise; flourishing with a variety of virtues in one spirit, they are adorned with various endowments of gifts, according to the words of Isaiah: 'Who are those that fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows?'¹⁷ There is no doubt, just as the chosen vessel¹⁸ made clear the support of spiritual gifts, with the trumpet of the Holy Spirit sounding and showing its form, that while individuals perform service for the divine name in individual things by taking gifts from the generosity of the Creator for their merits, they afterwards receive an accumulation of merits.¹⁹

12 Translating *orbem* rather than *urbem*, as seems necessary, given the rural situation of Réomé, although GC suggests that Jonas might be describing the community as a town.

13 The sense of this phrase is unclear, and it is absent from one manuscript. MW suggests that it may simply be a gloss on *simplicium animos* ('the souls of the simple'). We have followed GB's translation.

14 Jonas uses *trucidando*, which may, as GC suggests, be a variant of *trutinando*, 'weighing in the balance'.

15 The word is *praesul*, which Jonas uses for bishops (*VC* II: 8 (Chagnoald of Laon, Acharius of Vermand, Ragnachar of Augst, and Ouen of Therouanne), also *VI* 1 (Vedast)), as well as abbots (*VC*, *Ep.* to Waldebert and Bobolenus (Athala and Eustasius), I: 4 (Comgall), II: 8 (Agilus), 23 (Bertulf)). The word is also used for Pope Honorius (*VC* II: 23), and for Church leaders in general (*VC* I: 1, 5). It is even applied to Christ (*VC* I: 3, 30).

16 As ML observes, this is the normal meaning of *fulciuntur*.

17 Isaiah, 60:8.

18 *Vas electionis*: St Paul, as in Acts, 9:15.

19 In this text Jonas often repeats words in a single sentence, as, here, *meritis* and *meritorium*.

Here begin the chapters²⁰

1. His birth and style of life
2. The entry into the desert, the site of the monastery, and the dead serpent
3. The gathering of the religious brothers, the progress of the journey, and [how he] completed the progress to his own monastery²¹
4. How he subjected himself to obeying the jurisdiction of the abbot of Lérins, and having been discovered was ordered to return home
5. His return and the support of his comrade Filomer
6. The visit of his mother and his contempt for the delight of maternal desires
7. The discovery of the theft of the axes
8. The discovery of a half-naked pauper
9. The contempt of Agrestius and his penitence
10. The despised porter sent to Clarus
11. A servant [is possessed] by a demon and restored to health [by the man of God]²²
12. The restoration of a certain man's speech
13. The gift of meal multiplied by God
14. The [visitation/prayer] of Segonus, [and the revelation of how] he secretly entered the church²³

20 It is unclear whether the list is authorial or not. It may have been an addition made by the author of the first preface.

21 This sentence is opaque, apart from the initial phrase: the interpretation of the second phrase is based on John's actions in chapter 3. It is not easy to link the third phrase with the contents of the chapter – what gains there were for the monastery follow John's return in chapter 5.

22 The chapter title is fragmentary in the manuscript. We have translated Krusch's proposed reconstruction, following GB's suggestion.

23 The chapter title is fragmentary in the manuscript. We have translated Krusch's proposed reconstruction, as emended by GB, who notes that the first missing word could either be *visitatione* or *deprecatione*.

15. ... the gift of the Eucharist ... healed by John ...²⁴

16. The monk Claudius, who saw the heavens open

17. The liquid drawn from the well, and the sick man restored to health

18. The visit of the kings and nobles to the man of God and the admonition and exhortation of the subjects ...²⁵

19. The death of the most holy man ... and the elevation of the abbot Silvester²⁶

[20. ...]²⁷

The end of the list of chapters

THE LIFE OF SAINT JOHN, MONK AND ABBOT

1. Therefore, we strive, in committing to memory with the pen the life of the blessed John, monk and abbot, a man to be revered and imitated with religious devotion,²⁸ to reveal the nature and scale of the struggles of his labour that he strove to undergo, and how by displaying exceptional conduct he transmitted his memory to our own times, so that not only did he receive the fruits of his labours, but he also taught those whom he subsequently drew to the imitation of his struggle, after glorious triumphs and the medicine for sinners to attain the additional rewards of eternal life. And so the story should be followed from his beginnings, his parents, and the place where he was born. The place of upbringing of the venerable John was in the territory of the *castrum* of Tonnerre,²⁹ which is situated in the

24 The chapter title is fragmentary in the manuscript: following GB's suggestion we have translated the legible words.

25 The chapter title is incomplete in the manuscript.

26 The chapter title is incomplete in the manuscript.

27 There is no surviving title for chapter 20.

28 We follow ML's suggestion for the translation of *cultus religionis*, and, for the sake of clarity, GC's reordering of Jonas's complex sentence.

29 Tonnerre is in the department of Yonne, in Burgundy. The word *castrum* ought to imply a Roman, or perhaps pre-Roman, fort, though Tonnerre is not known for its Roman remains (see the absence of any comment on its archaeology in Vieillard-Troiekouff, *Les monuments religieux de la Gaule*, p. 297). It is, however, described as a *castrum* in Gregory of Tours, *DLH* V: 5 (trans. Thorpe, p. 260): according to Gregory the place had an archpriest, Munderic (who was also consecrated as bishop-elect of Langres). He was later

district of the city of Langres, in the villa called *Quartaniacum* on the river Brenne. He was born to not ignoble parents,³⁰ to a father called Hilary and a mother called Quieta, whose minds the observance of religion held chained and bound with every devotion of Christian reverence. He was brought up and nourished by his parents even in the first stages of his youth, both in his childhood and his adolescence,³¹ in the observance of Christian vigour and religion.

2. When he was around twenty years old he began habitually in his mind to seek out things more elevated and stricter than normal,³² so that, having left his place of birth, he might both pursue a glorious life and educate his mind by religious devotion, with total concentration, wherever he might display above all³³ the passion of his soul. But he set to work and established a very small oratory in the place where he had been brought up,³⁴ so that, while, with Christ's help, he brought the anxious desires of his heart³⁵ to completion in his thought, he might fulfil the consolations of prayer and the mystery of religion as best he could. But since his mind, devoted to God, sought support neither from his relatives nor from his household, and would not bear the pressure of the common people, he chose to seek out the secret places of the desert, wherever a suitable place became available.³⁶ He did this at the time when the consul John ruled the Gauls under imperial jurisdiction.³⁷ And so on a certain day he went to

forcibly removed from Tonnerre, which might suggest that the place had some defences. The reference to the villa of *Quartaniacum* suggests that John came from a landed family. The description of Tonnerre being *in suburbano Lingonice urbis* is surprising: Tonnerre is 120 km from Langres, which was, however, the centre of the diocese and county to which it belonged.

30 He was not, therefore, a noble, but nor was he from the lower classes. It becomes apparent that he has servants.

31 Technically, *pueritia* lasted until the age of seventeen and *adulescentia* from fifteen to thirty.

32 We follow ML's suggestion.

33 Reading *potissimum* as an adverb, following ML's suggestion.

34 For the building of an oratory on or near an ancestral estate in the Rhône-Saône valleys, see Wood, 'Prelude to Columbanus', p. 5.

35 On Jonas's use of the phrase *anxia cordis vota*, see Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', pp. 26–27. It may be also worth noting the stress on *cor* (heart) in the *Monita* of Porcarius (*PL*, Supplementum III, pp. 738–39). Porcarius was probably the abbot of Lérins at the time of John's visit to the island monastery.

36 *Eremus* (desert) here is figurative, essentially indicating a place of solitude to which a would-be ascetic could withdraw.

37 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', pp. 18–22 sees this statement

listen to Mass at the basilica – it was the festival of the blessed John the Baptist³⁸ – having heard the Gospel reading in its full extent, penetrating its meaning with the fire of his desire where it says:³⁹ ‘And the child grew and was strengthened in spirit: and he was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel.’⁴⁰ Then when he had heard on another occasion that the blessed evangelist John left his father Zebedee with his ship and without any hesitation followed Christ,⁴¹ fearless in his mental ardour and inflamed with celestial desire, leaving father and mother and the land of his birth, he entered the forest between two rivers, that is between the Armançon and the Serain, which is seven miles distant from the *castrum* of Semur-en-Auxois.⁴² There he found a place in which he might live as a recruit of Christ, and bearing the gleaming sword of the celestial militia, with which he might repel the army of the enemy in battle, he settled there, rejoicing. In that place there was a well, in which a serpent lived,⁴³ having established itself in the wilderness. Having discovered this, he came to the well with his companions;⁴⁴ having prayed to God, he stirred up⁴⁵ the well in whatever way and as thoroughly as he could, and then he found the poisonous snake dead. Having thrown it a long way from the place, he remained there for a while, and built the site of a monastery,

as an indication that the narrative of the *Vita Iohannis* is a construct intended to convey a particular model of monastic life. He notes that Krusch identified the consul as being one of those for 453, 456, and 457, but prefers to see the John in question as being the usurping emperor of 423–25, thus fitting with the impossible chronology of Jonas (that the saint lived for 120 years). In fact, it is possible to argue that Jonas’s evidence is plausible, since two consuls named John who held the office at a time likely to coincide with John’s lifetime are Iohannis Scytha (498) and Flavius Iohannis (499). For further discussion, see the section of the Introduction dedicated to ‘Jonas’s *Life of John*’.

38 The two feasts for the Baptist are 24 June and (for his martyrdom) 29 August. The gospel reading (Luke 1:80) suggests that the day in question was 24 June: see Bobbio Missal, *Lictiones in Missa sancti Iohannis Baptiste*, ed. Lowe, pp. 94–96.

39 Literally, ‘the Gospel reading having been heard and drawn out to its full extent’. John is the subject of *penetrans*, and the Gospel of *ait*. We follow ML’s interpretation.

40 Luke 1:80.

41 Mark 1:20.

42 Like Tonnerre, Semur, which is in the Côte-D’Or region of Burgundy, does not boast Roman archaeology. It is, however, very close to Alise-Sainte-Reine, the site of Caesar’s defeat of Vercingetorix. It may have been the site of a Roman fort.

43 For parallels (especially with Athanasius’s *Life of Antony*), see Diem, ‘The Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, p. 24.

44 John was apparently of high enough status to have servants.

45 As ML notes, *inquietavit* seems to imply that he stirred up the water with a view to driving out any unwanted creatures.

and following the example of the Holy Fathers,⁴⁶ he established a subject community under the hold of a rule by following which they would make progress, and he encouraged them in every way, setting forth the cups of heavenly antidotes,⁴⁷ through which the disease of sinners might be driven out, to follow the zeal of earlier monks.

3. And since the reputation of the man of God was already growing everywhere,⁴⁸ people⁴⁹ began to gather from all over and to honour him with their service. So with the crowd of monks growing there, he began to think with an anxious pang in his heart, what might be better, and whether he might more beneficially achieve any increase of reward if he controlled the community⁵⁰ over which he was in charge, or if, himself subject to others, he might profit by being obedient through implementation of the religious life. He came to the conclusion that it was better to subject himself to the bonds of mortification than to dominate others by ruling over them.⁵¹ And since, in particular, settled within the monastic enclosure,⁵² he had in no way learnt the norm of regular mortification and the discipline of earlier

46 Given what follows, the example of the Fathers might be a reference to the rules of Lérins.

47 St John the Evangelist is associated with the symbol of a chalice.

48 Cf. *VC* I: 18.

49 Jonas uses the word *plebs*, which in classical Latin would imply that these are people from the lower levels of free society. Elsewhere, however, he uses the word in such phrases as *plebs Christi*, *plebes monasteriorum*, and *plebes monachorum*, where the word comes closer to meaning 'congregation'.

50 Again, Jonas uses the word *plebs*.

51 Jonas perhaps deliberately avoids stating, at this moment, that John simply abandoned his own monastery, although it becomes clear from the sequel that this is what happened. To have openly stated the point at this moment in the narrative would scarcely have been to John's credit. On the oddity of Jonas's account at this point, see Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 9.

52 Jonas clearly envisages the establishment of monastic *septa* (enclosure) before the arrival of Columbanus. The emphasis here and elsewhere in the *Vita* might suggest the influence of Caesarius on John (*Regula ad Virgines*, 50, ed. de Vogüé, pp. 236–37), rather than being an idea read back from Columbanian tradition. See de Vogüé, *Vie de Colomban*, p. 138 for the spread of the idea through the pre-Columbanian *Rule of Ferreolus* and *Regula Tarnatensis*. Although Caesarius himself does not use the word *septa*, it does appear in Gregory of Tours, *DLH* IX: 41 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 533–34), where the nuns of Poitiers are criticized for breaking out of the *septa monasterii*. Since this community of the Holy Cross was subject to a version of Caesarius' Rule, we can accept that the term was in use within Caesarean communities. See the discussion of the term *septa* in the introduction, section 3, above.

fathers under the rigour of obedience, but rather had learnt what reading or the reputation of religious behaviour⁵³ sowed in his heart or brought to his hearing, having set aside hesitation and all doubt, he began to look for weapons, with which he could protect his subject limbs: he seized a shield, with which he might fend off the wiles of the devil, a helmet, with which he might preserve his head safe for the faith, and a sword, with which he might correct earthly errors.⁵⁴

4. Finally, searching for the life-style of the religious, he came to the monastery of Lérins,⁵⁵ where at that time the venerable Honoratus⁵⁶ was instructing many in the forms of religion, and advising⁵⁷ them to keep to the norms of religious discipline. Therefore, when he arrived there,

53 Following ML's rendering of *fama religionis*.

54 Ephesians, 6:16, 17. See also *VC* I: 3.

55 In the early years of the sixth century, at the time of John's visit, Lérins was in the Visigothic kingdom of Aquitaine, whereas the area from which John came was under Burgundian rule (as was also the case for Caesarius). Here Lérins is a model community, such as we can see from the *Life of Caesarius* (*Vita Caesarii*) and from the *Life of the Fathers of Jura* (*Vita Patrum Iurensium*). According to *VC* II: 1, a century later, Athala was driven to leave the monastery on account of the failure of the community to follow religious discipline. The disparaging comment on the monastery may, of course, have been necessary to justify the monk's departure, which, by the 'semi-Benedictine' standards of Jonas's day would have been contrary to regular practice. Whether or not Lérins really was in so poor a state around 600, it is clear that Jonas appreciated its written traditions. Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 21 nn. 98–99 lists numerous parallels to John's journey to Lérins, seeing this (p. 22) as a further indication that the *Vita* is a constructed narrative. Dubreucq, 'Lérins et la Burgondie dans le haut Moyen Âge', p. 205 also lists parallel journeys to Lérins, including those of Theudarius, Leobinus, Arnulf, and Albinus. To these one should add the Northumbrian, Benedict Biscop. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: Life, Testament, Letters*, p. 24 gathers evidence for its continued importance in the sixth century.

56 Honoratus founded Lérins, c.410, and became bishop of Arles in 426, dying in 429/30 (see *PCBE* IV, 1, Honoratus 1, pp. 1017–23). He cannot, therefore, have been abbot at the time of John, who would appear from the remainder of Jonas's account to have been active in the first half of the sixth century. The abbot in question must have been either Porcarius, who was in post when Caesarius was a monk in the community (c.488–99), or Leontius, who is known from the writings of Ennodius of Pavia and the *Vita Patrum Iurensium*: see Heijmans and Pietri, 'Le "lobby" lérinien: le rayonnement du monastère insulaire du V^e siècle au début du VII^e siècle', pp. 45–46. The fullest study of Porcarius is that by Delcogliano, 'Porcarius of Lérins and his Counsels: A Monastic Study I', and 'Porcarius of Lérins and his Counsels: A Monastic Study II'. The name Honoratus is in the genitive, which might be an error of Jonas or an early scribe, or might indicate a lacuna in the text, which could have named a successor of Honoratus.

57 The word *commoneo* may indicate an awareness of the mid-fifth-century *Commonitorium* of Vincent of Lérins.

accompanied only by two companions, with all his status taken away, and subject to the observance of humility and obedience, he submitted himself to all in bearing the yoke of obedience. And when, as the lowest in every observance of humility, he had already borne the rigour of obedience for eighteen months, someone came to the aforementioned monastery of Lérins. And while he was looking at individual monks labouring in the execution of necessary work, he noticed the venerable John among the rest. Having observed him for a long while, and carefully asking what his name was, he realized who he was, and revealing the truth to all, prostrate at his feet, he said, 'Surely this is the venerable monk John, who came here, fleeing from the distinction of his station?'⁵⁸ And when those who were present asked what he wished to say, he set out everything in order, just as the truth of the matter had it. And thus recognized, he was held in appropriate veneration both by the elders and by the company of brothers. When this had been revealed, bishop Gregory of Langres⁵⁹ began to take it badly that he might lose the consolations [of John] for the flock,⁶⁰ which had been placed under him, and without delay he sent men from the monastic community⁶¹ with a package of letters. One of them was addressed to the man who was

58 Following ML's rendering of *praelationem honorum fugiens*. The *praelatio honorum* is clearly his previous position at Réomé.

59 The great-grandfather of Gregory of Tours, whose life is recorded in Gregory's *LVP* VII (trans. James, pp. 60–64). *PCBE* IV, 1, Gregory 1, pp. 910–14. Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 19 sees the presence of Gregory of Langres as another indication that this is a constructed narrative. In fact, Gregory of Langres is both chronologically appropriate and he can also be shown to have been bishop at a time of monastic development in his diocese (Wood, 'Prelude to Columbanus', pp. 12–14). This is even clear from Gregory of Tours, *LGC* 85–86 (trans. James, pp. 91–92), which describes two saints of the region who were active during his episcopate. That John belonged in this context was noted by an early redactor of Gregory, who added a chapter, stating the main points from Jonas's *Vita* (see James, pp. 91–92 n. 96). That Gregory omitted John from his coverage of the saints of the region is not surprising: he was far more interested in holy bishops than in monks. Moreover, one of the early abbots of Réomé was called Silvester (*VJ* 19): since Gregory's brother, Peter, was killed in the course of a quarrel relating to the death of another Silvester (*DLH* V: 5, trans. Thorpe, pp. 259–62), one may wonder if Gregory ignored John and his foundations because they impinged too closely on an unfortunate episode in the history of his own family. It is notable here and elsewhere in the *VJ* that Jonas is far happier to note episcopal authority than he is in the *VC*. This has implications for the question of Jonas's authorship of the *VV*.

60 *Plebs* here might refer simply to the monastic community at Semur, in which case Jonas is implying that the monastery was under the jurisdiction of the bishop, or it might refer to the whole congregation of the diocese. See also the note on *VC* praef.

61 As in *VJ* 3, *septa* is used: see n. 52, above.

in charge and to the community subject to him,⁶² so they should not be opposed to [John's] return, for they would become accomplices in the common harm. The other was specifically addressed to the venerable man John, demanding his return: and that if he failed to do so, resisting by delay, he should fear to be subject to the judgement of God for the damage done to the deserted and abandoned community. Both he who was in charge, on account of the loss of a good companion, and also the venerable John, on account of the penalty of judgement that had been imposed, began to consider the issue with an anxious sting in their hearts. But overcome by the advice of all, he was ordered to return to his fatherland, and once again to take charge of the neglected care of the community, to administer the holy word,⁶³ so that he, who desired to merit his own salvation, should not be subjected to the judgement of damnation, for the abandonment of so many souls.⁶⁴

5. Therefore, having returned to the aforesaid place, he strove once again to administer salubrious draughts to the monks, under the tenor of the rule,⁶⁵ which the blessed Macharius set down.⁶⁶ And better to inspire the educated congregation to celestial joys, he had assisting him the monk Filomer,

62 As GC comments, the phrases *subiecta sibi plebe* ('placed under him') and *adque subiecta sibi plebe* ('subject to him') involve a copyist's repetition. We have avoided the repetition.

63 We have translated *praeconia* ('proclamation') as 'the holy word': as GC comments, presumably the reference is to preaching or the administration of the liturgy.

64 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 28 see parallels with *Rule of Benedict*, 2.6, 27, and *Rule of the Master*, 2.6–15.

65 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 11 suggests emending *sub regulare tenore* ('under regular tenor') to *sub regule tenore* ('under the tenor of the rule').

66 De Vogüé identified this rule as the so-called *Regula Macarii* (ed. de Vogüé, *Les règles des saints pères*, 1, pp. 372–89), preserved by Benedict of Aniane, and he tentatively suggested (pp. 344–47) that Porcarius was the author of the work. The case for Porcarius's authorship has been restated by Delcogliano, 'Porcarius of Lérins and his Counsels: A Monastic Study I', pp. 418–25. Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', pp. 11–16 by contrast sees a closer connection between John and the *Regula Quattuor Patrum* (ed. de Vogüé, *Les règles des saints pères*, 1, pp. 180–205), and argues strongly that this constitutes the Rule of Macarius referred to by Jonas. Dubreucq, 'Lérins et la Burgondie dans le haut Moyen Âge', pp. 209–10, also sees the *Rule of the Four Fathers* as the inspiration for John, but he notes that Filomer seems to exercise the role of *praepositus* as defined in *Regula Macarii* 7 (ed. de Vogüé, *Les règles des saints pères*, 1, pp. 374–75): he concludes that John changed the rule from that of Macarius to that of the Four Fathers. On the *Regula Quattuor Patrum* as a Lérinian text, see also Weiss, 'Lérins et la "Règle des Quatre Pères"', pp. 121–40.

dedicated to all holiness and religion, and with his support, without reservation he provided heavenly administration both to the monks and to the people.⁶⁷

6. Then his mother, learning of⁶⁸ the wished-for return of her venerable son, hurried to visit him, so that, rejoicing, she might see him, the sight of whom had so long been kept from her, and might open up an opportunity for her wishes.⁶⁹ And so, having set out, she came to him in the place where the man of God was established, and asked the cooperation⁷⁰ of his servants, that they might arrange it so that she might merit to look at her yearned-for offspring with her own eyes. Having heard this, he shook his head, and refused to show favour to the wish of his mother, remembering the words, 'He that has not left father and mother is not worthy of me.'⁷¹ However, in order not to violate his mother's faith, which he had known to be founded on the love and fear of Christ, by rashly dismissing it, passing in front of her, he appeared briefly before her eyes, so that he should both satisfy his mother's desire and also that he should not soften the rigour of his religion on account of his mother's blandishments. And he asked, through his servants, that she might place herself in safety⁷² by directing her heart towards heavenly desires, and then she might know that she would never again see him in the present life.

7. At the same time the company of brothers set out to clean up the countryside by clearing the pathways and the overgrown bushes, so that the land returned to cultivation might yield fruit more plentifully.⁷³ While they were involved in the labour of the work, they were soon recalled by

67 The implication would seem to be that the monastery provided pastoral care outside the monastic community itself, attending both to the monks and to the local population.

68 Jonas uses the word *experiens*: Niermeyer gives 'to ascertain' as the prime meaning of *experiri* in medieval Latin.

69 For parallel stories about the mothers of saints, see Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 25, though he omits the obvious parallel relating to Columbanus and his mother, *VC* I: 3.

70 Following ML's rendering of *affectum* as good will or cooperation.

71 See Matthew 10:37. Here Jonas substitutes *non reliquerit* ('has not left') for *amat ... plus quam* ('loves more than'). See also *VC* I: 3, which contains the standard Vulgate version of the biblical verse when recounting Columbanus's departure from his mother.

72 Perhaps to be understood as becoming a nun.

73 On this miracle, see Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', pp. 29–30. With regard to the sin of *negligentia*, Diem notes parallels with Columbanus, *Communal Rule* II–III (*SCO*, p. 142), the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*, 16, and with *VC* I: 15, 16.

an elder, and having left their axes on site obediently they return to the monastery. Having done as they were commanded, they set out to return to the field to carry on the work. They find that the axes have been stolen, and set off to report to the father the loss caused by negligence. And while he, taking their negligence badly, ordered the brothers to engage in prayer or reading, he, involved in the prayer, asks the Lord, beseeching Him,⁷⁴ why He suffers this loss to fall on his servants. And soon, after the prayer had been completed, he hastens to the field, and sees the man who had committed the criminal theft coming hurriedly. He falls⁷⁵ with a swift motion at the feet of the blessed man, and identifies himself as being guilty of the crime that had been committed, and he promises that the seizure would be made good without delay. Then he [John] did not refuse to give pardon to the petitioner and praise⁷⁶ to him who had confessed.

8. While he was wandering through the woods in the traditional manner of ancient athletes⁷⁷ to pray and to fast, he found a certain half-naked pauper looking for food to live on, and carefully searching for fruits which the forest is accustomed to produce, so that he might conquer the hunger of the flesh with what food he could. He [John] asked what he was looking for, and drew out a verbal confession of the misery he endured. And he said, ‘Would that only hunger of the flesh affected you, and the hunger and thirst of the soul, which stays without nourishment, did not torment you. For truly if that poverty were to possess you, about which the Lord spoke prophetically, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”,⁷⁸ and “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill”,⁷⁹ you will lack no amount of food. But I will give you counsel in whatever way I can, so that you do not give up hope – for many have been without it because of the hopeless⁸⁰

74 The word is *pulsando* (‘beating’ or ‘knocking’: as GC notes, the reference may be to Matthew 7:7, ‘Knock, and it shall be opened unto you’).

75 Reading *curruit* as *corruit* (from *corruo*), following the suggestion of ML.

76 The meaning may be more specific: as GC notes, *eulogium* ought to mean a token of blessing or the Eucharist.

77 Jonas presumably has the image of the *athleta Christi*, ‘athlete of Christ’, in mind. The phrase is common, and appears, for instance, in Cassian, *Institutes* V: 8, 2; XI: 19, 1; XII: 32, 1.

78 Matthew 5:3.

79 Matthew 5:6.

80 Reading *insperato* from A2, rather than *inspiratu*. The emphasis on *spes* throughout the section seems to support the idea that Jonas is deliberately comparing hope and hopelessness.

habit of the age – “Put your hope in the Lord, and he will nourish you”, and, having adopted the zeal for work, following the Apostle,⁸¹ as is good, so that you might have things for your own use and provide what is necessary for those in want.’ After making the sign of the cross on the man’s chest, he tells him to return home. Obedient to the command of the man of God, he undertook such a load of work that he never thereafter lacked what was necessary.

9. A certain man called Agrestius⁸² had come to the aforesaid monastery driven by his eagerness to hear the solemnities of Mass.⁸³ He prostrated himself on the floor and, pouring out abundant prayers, he besought the Lord of all with his appeal. Finally, having risen from the floor, he waited, desiring to hear the solemnities of the Mass from the mouth of the blessed man. When the time came, the man of God commands that all leave the church and go outside, and hand the place over to quiet, so that he might perform the accustomed solemnities with his companions, as was his custom,⁸⁴ and that he might offer the eucharistic sacrifice without the tumult of the crowd. But he, keeping his counsel,⁸⁵ goes outside, and does not endure either to stand outside or to wait for the sacraments of the oblations. He goes home with the innermost part of his heart puffed up with pride, and there in the dead of night, wrapped in his bedding, he sees the venerable man, bearing the treasure of the Eucharist in his right hand, stand before his bed and say to him as a rebuke: ‘Look’, he said, ‘Agrestius,

81 Ephesians 4:28, ‘He that stole, let him steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give him that suffereth need.’

82 Manuscripts B and C add the comment that he was a citizen of Mesmont (*Magnimontensium partium civis*), presumably the village of that name in the Côte d’Or rather than in the Ardennes. It was the centre of a Carolingian *pagus*, and was given to St-Bénigne de Dijon by a later bishop of Langres. The additions in these manuscripts suggest that an early redactor had access to some local tradition. Jonas surely made a connection between this Agrestius and the opponent of Eustasius in *VC* II: 9–10, as noted by Diem, ‘The Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, p. 31. Again, the link with another text, however, is no proof that the narrative of the *VJ* is entirely fictitious: it is perfectly possible that the two Agrestii came from the same family.

83 It would, therefore, appear that laymen had access to the church, but not, as it turns out, to church services, although after the service oblations were offered to those staying outside. On this whole episode, see Diem, ‘The Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, pp. 30–33. We are indebted to ML for improving the translation.

84 Krusch sees a parallel with *VC* I: 19.

85 Following ML’s explanation of *mutu animo*, literally, ‘dumb in mind’.

had you not blasphemed yesterday, although you would not have received the sacrament of the Eucharist physically, it would have been offered to you spiritually: now, therefore, because you presumed to blaspheme, it is spiritually denied to you.’ Rising from his sleep, he makes ready to wash away the stain of his fault, and, returning to the man of God, he begs that his sins be absolved, through asking pardon.⁸⁶

10. Thereafter, the servant of a certain man, who was called Clarus,⁸⁷ fled to the blessed man on account of committing a crime.⁸⁸ And when he closely inquired into the nature of the crime, he discovered the kind of sin which had been committed,⁸⁹ and not wanting to refuse mercy to the man asking pardon, he ordered someone to take a letter, and to go to Clarus on account of the accusation against the unhappy man, and to beg for his life and pardon. So, when Clarus had taken the letter that had been brought by the messenger, he asked the reason for it, and what the text of the letter or the messenger wished him to do. The latter set out the matter in question. And when Clarus heard the name, he was turned to fury, and threw down the letter of the blessed man, which he spat on,⁹⁰ and giving a harsh reply, he drove out the messenger. Divine vengeance followed without delay! It vehemently struck Clarus’s mouth and throat,⁹¹ so that for a long period of time⁹² he could neither take the nourishment of bread nor the sacrament of the holy body.⁹³

86 Manuscripts B and C add ‘Nor should anyone think this is a tall story, that we relate: we learnt it from the venerable man, the deacon Agripinus, who was himself the son of Agrestius.’

87 Jonas is interested in the name of the master and not of the servant. The name Clarus (though clearly not the same individual) recurs in other hagiographical texts from the Burgundian region: see *Vita Clari*.

88 For an interpretation of the chapter, see Diem, ‘The Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, pp. 33–34.

89 Some expansion is needed to clarify the meaning of the Latin. We follow ML’s suggestion. GC proposed the alternative, equally plausible, reconstruction: ‘when he inquired into the [blame attached to the] accusation, he discovered that the man had committed the crime’.

90 The Latin *beati viri epistolam salibo inlitam* literally means ‘the letter of the blessed man, smeared with saliva’. Jonas has *saliba* for *saliva* (the shift from v to b is standard in Merovingian Latin), and has turned it into a masculine noun. (We thank ML for clarification.)

91 Appropriately, given the fact that he spat on the saint’s letter.

92 Manuscript C adds ‘for nine whole years’.

93 i.e. the Eucharist.

11. And then the servant of a certain man, who was called Nicasius,⁹⁴ who at that time administered an office of state,⁹⁵ was seized by the wiles of demons, and plagued with various torments, so that it was thought that he could scarcely be distressed by chains.⁹⁶ He was brought to the blessed John and presented to his sight. And looking at him, when he saw him, feeling pity for his agony, he gave himself to prayer, and with the sickness of the demon driven out, the man is restored to health. After his cure he remained attached to his service for a long time.

12. After this the son of a certain man was seized by the craft of a demon: he lost the use of speech, and lengthy silence of his lips tormented him, and he was brought and presented to the man of God. And when he saw him, he was sad, and he set himself the task by prayer and supplication to work against the loss to the human race and for a concession by the evil enemy. Nor was the goodness of divine mercy⁹⁷ long deferred. He heard the prayers poured out by His servant, and restored the use of speech to the man who had been condemned; this man afterwards joined the company of the brothers, and remained until death in that place in the religious habit.

13. At one time a terrible famine parched the region round about so strongly that for most there was no hope of surviving.⁹⁸ And so when they went to the man of God to ask for food, he, having before his eyes the Gospel proclamation 'Break your bread for the hungry',⁹⁹ and 'Give to every one that asketh thee',¹⁰⁰ saw them come and ministered to their needs. And when already a crowd of needy people was coming from all over, in ever greater numbers, he continued his usual work, and provided for all. Then one of

94 Again, Jonas only gives the name of the master.

95 Manuscripts B and C have 'who had been placed in charge of the government of the town of Avallon'. Nicasius appears as count of Avallon in Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Germani*, 30–31 (85–92), ed. Krusch, pp. 17–18. The town also features in *VC* I: 20. Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 20 sees the fact that the name appears in Venantius Fortunatus and in Jonas as further proof of the nature of the *VJ* as a historical construct: it is easier to see Nicasius as genuinely active at the time of John.

96 The word *angi* ('be distressed') seems odd: it is tempting to substitute 'held', but, as GC notes, it may be that the man was so wretched that he did not notice his chains. For the healing miracles in chapters 11–12, see Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', pp. 34–35.

97 Translating *pietas* as 'mercy', following ML's suggestion.

98 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 35 notes the parallels with *VC* I: 7, 22. See also *VC* I: 17 for a similar miracle.

99 Isaiah 58:7.

100 Luke 6:30.

those under him went to the father, and said that they did not have a supply¹⁰¹ of as much flour as the horde of the needy were demanding. He, groaning, asked that whatever barrel they chose should be filled and set on one side, so that the food of the needy might be distributed from it. Soon they¹⁰² had filled the barrel, which took more than five times five modii.¹⁰³ and the rest that they had they set aside for the use of the brothers. And so, when the crowd of the needy had for a while been fed from that barrel, it happened that someone as usual asked him to provide him with the necessary food. He orders that the regular measure be given to the needy man. Then his agent says, 'Nothing or only a very little remains in the barrel, but everything has been given to the poor, as you ordered.' Having heard this, he raises his eyes to heaven, and, on bended knee, he implores the Lord the Giver of all. Having prayed, he gives an order to his agent: 'Go,' he says, 'Distribute the food of the needy, with the help of faith.' The agent goes, and finds the barrel full, and having taken out the measure of grain, he distributed it to the poor. Then he expresses his opinion to the father that these things should be announced,¹⁰⁴ but [John] orders silence on the matter, so that the stain of pride should not detract from the increment of grace.¹⁰⁵

14. One night, in thick darkness, venerable Segonus, coming from his cell, secretly entered the basilica,¹⁰⁶ and besought the Lord of all in his prayers. This was divinely revealed to the man of God, and he summons a messenger to go with haste,¹⁰⁷ and strike the bell,¹⁰⁸ and to wake his

101 Emending *cupies* to *copiam*, which is the reading of MS A2.

102 The noun, *ille*, is singular, but the verb in the second half of the sentence is plural, so it seems best to emend to *illi*, plural.

103 *Quinques quina* clearly refers to the amount of grain. As GB notes, the phrase can be found in Augustine, *De Musica*, Origen, *In Numeros*, and Martianus Capella, *On the Seven Liberal Arts*, VII, 722, 768, 786. A *modius* is around 8.75 litres.

104 The most straightforward translation of Jonas's phrase *patri nuntianda credit* ('he believes these things should be told to the father') makes no sense in the context, since the father (John) already knows.

105 Cf. *VC*, *Ep.* to Waldebert and Bobolenus, II: 2. The original source is Mark 1:43–44.

106 Krusch follows the reading *ad cellula sua*, but from what follows it is clear that Segonus, who is probably to be equated with Sequanus (*PCBE* IV, 2, p. 1732), has come to John's monastery: *a cellula sua*, 'from his cell' in MS A2, is surely preferable. He enters the church, but this, it would seem, was not inside the monastic enclosure.

107 Following C's *citoque* rather than *ascitoque*.

108 *Tacto signo*, literally, 'the sign having been touched': it is not clear what was the method for rousing everyone, but the word *tacto* suggests that something was hit, and striking a bell or a beam would seem the most likely. See also *VC* I: 17.

fellows, because their common brother Segonus, having secretly entered the church, is beating the Lord with prayers. And so it proved to be, and the gift of hospitality was zealously fulfilled for the venerable brother.

15. And now when the kings of the Franks subjected the provinces of Gaul to the rule of their government, having removed the jurisdiction of the Empire, and having set aside the domination of the Roman State,¹⁰⁹ and were delighting in their own power, it happened that Theudebert the son of Theuderic, the son of Clovis, made war on Italy, and having crossed the Alps, harassed Italy. He soon returned, and dismissed the generals Mummolenus and Buccelenus, to whom he had entrusted leadership in battle, and made his way back home.¹¹⁰ At that time a certain man¹¹¹ was sick with the quartan fever,¹¹² and was thought to be about to breathe his last breath: his brother rushed to the man of God, and arriving in a hurry, he humbly begged the gift of the Eucharist, together with prayers offered to God for the consolation of the sick man.¹¹³ Then he [John] did not delay praying and sending the consolation of the Eucharist, but offered help to

109 The Latin is *res publica*, but ‘republic’ in English carries connotations inappropriate for the rule of the Late Roman emperors. This description is striking in presenting the Frankish takeover of Gaul in a markedly different manner from that described by Gregory of Tours, but rather as an overthrow of imperial power in the days of Clovis’ sons, which comes much closer to a Byzantine view, as represented in Procopius, *Wars*, VII: 33, 2–6; it may well reflect a view which Jonas came across while he was still in Italy. See the discussion of Jonas’s *VJ* in the Introduction.

110 The 539 invasion of Italy is recorded by Gregory of Tours, *DLH* III: 32 (trans. Thorpe, p. 189), Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle*, s.a. 539, and Procopius, *Wars*, VI: 25, 5, and 24, as noted by Krusch (p. 338 nn. 1–2). On Buccelenus, see also Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards* II: 2 (trans. Foulke, pp. 54–55). On the problems of reconstructing these events, see Wood, ‘The Frontiers of Western Europe: Developments East of the Rhine in the Sixth Century’, p. 242 n. 88. Diem, ‘The Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, p. 20 sees the fact that the Italian campaign is mentioned in Gregory as further evidence that the *VJ* is a constructed narrative. There is, however, nothing to prove that Jonas took the information from Gregory, and indeed Mummolenus does not appear at this point in Gregory’s *Histories*, although Mummolus (as the name appears in Gregory) is mentioned as being active in Theudebert’s reign in Gregory of Tours, *LGM* 30 (trans. Van Dam, pp. 50–51). See the discussion of Jonas’s *VJ* in the Introduction.

111 C has *Germanus meus Fidamiolus*: ‘my brother Fidamiolus’. The additions in B and C may derive from Réomé tradition.

112 Since the quartan fever is malaria, and since malaria was prevalent in the Po Valley, the disease may have been caught during the Italian campaign of 539. There may thus be an unstated, even unrecognized, connection between the Italian campaign and the miracle.

113 On the miracle itself, see Diem, ‘The Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, p. 36.

the man who petitioned with the ardour of faith. He ordered a wafer¹¹⁴ together with five apples to be taken to the sick man. Once he had received the gift the man came quickly to his brother. While he was a long way off the sick man sensed the coming gift, and asking his brother, he requested that the gift of the host be given to him. On his arrival, the other brought it, and having broken it in three and dipped it in wine,¹¹⁵ gave it to the sick man. And he, rejoicing, with the ardour of faith, consumed the gift of the host, and immediately the sickness was driven out, and he regained his health.

16. It resounds throughout the world in the bosom of the Church, and is known to the faithful through the illuminating light of truth, how many sublime examples of the miracles of God in his saints spread their fragrance.¹¹⁶ At the time when the crops, having reached their yearly ripeness, were ready for cutting in that community,¹¹⁷ and a group of brothers were keen to rush out in a crowd to cut the corn, the arrival of horrid night brought an end to the work that had been carried out for the whole day. And when everyone had returned to the monastery, by order of the elders, one of the brothers, Claudius by name, remained to guard the corn. And having taken some sleep,¹¹⁸ waking at the dead of night, he raised the ardour of his mind up to heaven, in accordance with the words 'I sleep and my heart watcheth',¹¹⁹ and he began to worry that, tired in limb, the bodies of his companions might lie in excessively deep sleep, and with the act of prayer forgotten, they might put off the proper performance of routine until the coming of dawn.¹²⁰ And while he considered this in the anxious soul of his heart, he suddenly saw the heavens opened and a glowing globe illuminate the entire world.¹²¹ And soon, while his mind was struck with terror by the miracle

114 *Paximacio*, a biscuit: cf. Gildas, *Penitential*, 1, *paximati panis mensura* ('a ration of dried bread'), ed. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, pp. 60–61. GB also notes Benedict of Aniane, *Codex Regularum* 30, 17; 35, 2 (*PL* 103, cols 995A, 1019B).

115 Adding to the Eucharistic imagery.

116 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 37 thinks that the first sentence of chapter 16 should really be placed at the end of chapter 15.

117 The Latin, in *supradictum coenobio*, is ungrammatical for no apparent reason.

118 Jonas has *somno* rather than *somnum*.

119 Song of Solomon 5:2.

120 The phrase *iustum tramitis usum* ('the proper performance of routine') is not easy to translate, but in what follows it is clear that Jonas is thinking about the performance of the liturgy.

121 Krusch, p. 329 n. 1 noted the similarity between this vision and that of Domma in *VC* II: 16.

that had been worked,¹²² the winged cockerel raised its customary voice and announced the coming of light to the world, and the bell having been struck,¹²³ the whole community of the brothers entered the church to pray and sing. Rejoicing, after light had been delivered to the world, he eagerly told the father what he had seen. But so that he should not pollute his mind, having been corrupted by the stimulus of pride,¹²⁴ [the father] warned him: ‘Never presume, with a proud heart, to say that you have seen such things! For in what way is it right that a man placed in such a weak state and stained with the contagion of sins should deserve to contemplate heavenly things?’¹²⁵

17. A certain man, while he was hurrying home from Paris, was struck extremely badly by [a plague of] ulcers,¹²⁶ which was spread within the whole confines of Gaul and polluted many places,¹²⁷ and coming home he asked that some water might be brought to him from the well which the man of God had blessed, and was situated within the enclosure of the monastery,¹²⁸ and he had faith that he would soon regain his health. Having despatched a servant, he brought back the liquid with a blessing. After the invalid had drunk it, the wound lost the force of its fiery pain and he returned to health, and afterwards lived¹²⁹ unharmed.

122 Following *pulsaretur* in manuscripts A2 and C. *Mirando facto* (‘by the wonder that had taken place’) in A2 also seems preferable to *mirandi facta*, where *facta* might be taken with *pavefacta* (an emphatic ‘rendered terrified’), but that leaves the genitive of *mirandi* (‘of the wonder’) unexplained.

123 Again, it is not clear whether the *signum* (*signo tacto*) is a bell, or another means of signalling, such as a beam. See n. 108.

124 As happened in the case of Domma, *VC* II: 16.

125 We have followed MW’s suggestion here.

126 The Latin simply has *ulceræ* (‘by an ulcer’), but the following clause implies something more general. We have, therefore, added ‘plague’.

127 The plague of 543 is attested in Gregory of Tours, *DLH* IV: 5 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 199–200), and also in the *LVP* VI: 6 (trans. James, pp. 57–58): see Little, ‘Life and Afterlife of the First Plague Pandemic’, p. 10. Diem, ‘The Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, pp. 19, 20 again sees the mention of an event to be found in Gregory as proof that the narrative of the *VJ* is a construct: but once more it is easier to see this as reflecting genuine information. On the meaning of the miracle, however, see Diem, ‘The Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, p. 38.

128 Although the emphasis on the *septa* of the monastery clearly coincided with the ideology of Columbanian monasticism, it might again reflect the influence of the Caesarean tradition, as noted above.

129 Krusch notes that Jonas uses the phrase *cum superis agere* simply to mean ‘to live’.

18. With how much honour he was regarded, through the veneration of the kings of the Franks and the nobles, it would take a long time to tell.¹³⁰ There was in him, as I may say with due precision,¹³¹ a passion for all virtues, and a castigation of the body. He had endured fasts and prayers equally as a youth, and he bore them, in like manner, as an old man. He taught those subject to him¹³² by example, that ‘gastrimargia’,¹³³ that is gluttony, ‘cenodoxia’,¹³⁴ that is vanity, and arrogance, that is pride,¹³⁵ are the greatest vices, through which, he had learned, Adam, deceived in paradise, died, and he persuaded the congregation subject to him to avoid them entirely, lest in similar manner, just as Adam fell as a result of these three vices and was segregated from paradise, and cast out, likewise, his imitators, cut off from the company of the just and deprived from all joy of light perpetual, should be damned to eternal punishment, when they succumb in obedience to belly, gullet, and throat, and when minds are disturbed by weakness under the goad of vanity, and when souls subject to God are wounded by the evil of pride. He, indeed, immersing himself in fasts and vigils, having crushed all enticements, with his virtues abounding, denied the delights of the body through the vigour of the soul, so that the desire of the soul should be lit by the flame about which the Lord spoke: ‘I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled?’,¹³⁶ so that he might gather the fruit of all virtues, offering this word always in heart and mouth: ‘My soul hath coveted to long for

130 Manuscript C adds ‘let no one doubt, who desires to reread the donations offered by the aforesaid kings through the orders of charters, which are now preserved in the public archives (*in publicis archivis*) of the aforesaid monastery’. Unfortunately, all the surviving Merovingian charters of Réomé are later forgeries.

131 This follows Krusch’s reading of ‘ut opido iurae dicam’. As ML notes, *opido* is the adverb *oppido*, ‘exceedingly’ or ‘precisely’. The reading of A1, *ut opinor iurae dicam*, ‘as I think I might rightly say’ might be preferable.

132 Jonas has *subditus* (‘in subjection’), which ought to describe John himself, but makes no sense. It seems better to emend to *subditos* (‘those subject to him’).

133 See Cassian, *Institutes*, Book 5, ‘De spiritu gastrimargiae’. The quotations in this chapter place John firmly within the tradition of Lérinian monasticism, and suggests that Réomé was still attached to that tradition, even at the time of Jonas. On the interpretation of Cassian by Jonas in this chapter, see Diem, ‘The Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, pp. 38–44. The *Monita* of Porcarius also stress the standard vices.

134 See Cassian, *Institutes*, Book 11, ‘De spiritu cenodoxiae’.

135 See Cassian, *Institutes*, Book 12, ‘De spiritu superbiae’.

136 Luke, 12:49. Krusch’s text (*quam volo, ut ardeat?*) differs from the Vulgate (*et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?*), though the meaning is essentially the same.

thy justifications, at all times',¹³⁷ and, again, 'Therefore I have loved thy commandments above gold and topaz'.¹³⁸ Exhorting his monks with a cheerful look and a joyful face, he advised them, saying, 'Come let us praise the Lord with joy: let us joyfully sing to God our saviour. Let us come before his presence in confession and let us make a joyful noise to him in psalms'.¹³⁹ 'Come let us adore and throw ourselves before the Lord, and let us cry aloud before the Lord that made us, for he is the Lord our God.'¹⁴⁰ Committed with heart and body for the most pious work, he remembered that saint Paul said, if someone does not work he cannot take bread without danger.¹⁴¹ And considering the Institutes of the holy fathers, among many Conferences meditating particularly on the doctrine of saint Isaac the Scythian abbot,¹⁴² he restricted himself for the love of Christ, and was not embarrassed by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, but carried it. Always keeping unshaken the foundations of profound humility,¹⁴³ he checked the soul from every assault of unreliable impulse, and thus he deserved to be elevated little by little through divine contemplation and spiritual insight. In general, he cut himself off from concern for fleshly things, except for certain necessities, and he not only allowed no concern for business or legal action in any way, but he even refused to remember them. He cut out detraction, boastfulness, garrulousness, and scurrility alike, knowing that it would benefit others to be filled with what the order of religion had brought to him, that is, with whatever he had maintained from youth to old age. Although tired in limb, he absolutely did not allow there to be silence, and he set out to enhance all in common, sounding like the voice of the trumpet to the city¹⁴⁴ and shouting out the life-giving precepts of the Lord.

137 Psalms 118:20.

138 Psalms 118:127.

139 Psalms 94:1–2, but instead of the Vulgate reading of *in actione gratiarum* ('with thanks') Jonas has *in confessione*.

140 Psalms 94:6–7. Jonas departs even further from the Vulgate at this point, which has 'Come let us adore and fall down: and weep before the Lord that made us.'

141 Cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:10. See chapter 8, above.

142 On Isaac, see Cassian, *Conferences*, 9. Jonas, no doubt deliberately, employs the words *instituta* ('institutes') and *collationes* ('conferences'), the titles of Cassian's major works, in this sentence. In Late Antiquity, *collatio*, which had previously meant 'collection' tends to mean 'conference' (see Niermeyer, 'collatio').

143 Cassian, *Conferences*, 9.3.

144 Joshua 6:5.

19. And so he died when he was approximately 120 years old,¹⁴⁵ on the 28th January, complete in his bodily age and in the beauty of religion. His eyes had not grown dim,¹⁴⁶ nor did he experience any loss of teeth, retaining a vigorous tenacity of memory, nor, as happens in many, did decrepit age, having lost the habit of generosity, ever fall prey to avarice, but his extreme age equally brought¹⁴⁷ all the good things to which youth generally experiences.¹⁴⁸ He was buried not far from the abbey within the monastic precincts, in a place that he himself had chosen. The abbot appointed in his place was called Silvester,¹⁴⁹ whom, while still alive, he [John] ordered to take charge of the monastic community. Walking in the steps of the master, in the beauty of religion and the tenor of the rule, he flourished for a long time.¹⁵⁰ After him, on the orders of the venerable man Silvester, Mummolinus took over the care of ruling. Subsequently he was elected bishop of the church of Langres,¹⁵¹ and he appointed Leubardinus as abbot

145 This is obviously unlikely. Probably the number derives from the supposed age of Moses at the time of his death (Deuteronomy 34:7): it also fitted nicely with the erroneous identification of Honoratus as abbot at the time of John's stay in Lérins. On the parallels with Moses and Anthony, see Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 24. Diem (pp. 7, 19, 20, 50) uses the chronology to call into question further the factual accuracy of the *VJ*. This one topos, however, scarcely calls the totality of the narrative into question.

146 A further reference to the state of Moses at the time of his death: Deuteronomy 34:7. Cf. also, Athanasius, *Life of Antony* 60 (93), *PL* 73, col. 168.

147 Reading *portabat*, as in A2, rather than *pollebat*.

148 Recension C adds 'in the year of our Lord 512, according to the cycle of the blessed bishop Victorius': *anno Domini DXII, iuxta quod in cyclo beati Victurii episcopi numeratur*. This would equate to 539 AD. This is unlikely to be the correct date, given that chapter 17 appears to relate to 543 and chapter 15 almost certainly relates to 539. However, the reference to the Victorian calendar (which, of course, fits with the chronological system used in the preface) would suggest that this is derived from a genuine sixth- or seventh-century record.

149 Gregory of Tours names two Silvesters in the region: a bishop of Chalon-sur-Saône in the late fifth and early sixth century (*LGC* 84; trans. Van Dam, p. 90) and a bishop elect of Langres, who died of an epileptic fit in 572 (his son accused Gregory's brother, Peter, of murdering him): *DLH* V: 5 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 259–62). Although neither of these men can be equated with Abbot Silvester, their association with the Church in Upper Burgundy may indicate that they all belonged to the same family. In fact, *PCBE* IV, 2 lists five Silvesters from the same region: Silvester 1 (bishop of Chalon), p. 1806; Silvester 3 (bishop of Besançon), pp. 1808–09; Silvester 4 (abbot of Réomé), p. 1809; Silvester 5 (abbot of Tonnerre), p. 1809; Silvester 6, p. 1810.

150 Manuscript C adds 'and so the venerable Silvester died on 16 March, and was buried in the church of St John'. Krusch, p. 342 n. 3 notes that the Réomé martyrology provides the same date.

151 Gregory of Tours notes the election of abbot Mummolus as bishop of Langres, *DLH* V: 5 (trans. Thorpe, p. 262), which can be dated to 579/80. See *PCBE* IV, 2, Mummolus 4,

in his place, with the consent of the monks. He moved the tomb in which the remains of the holy body of the blessed John were buried to the place in which it now stands.

20. And it does not seem inappropriate to insert in this work what then took place in that translation. For when they wanted to raise and move the tomb from the place in which it stood, and the earth all round had been dug out, they could still in no way move the sarcophagus, so it was decided that they should undertake the labour of a three-day fast. And when the third day dawned from the beginning of the fast – it was the 22nd September, on which day the venerable feast of the blessed martyr Maurice with his companions shines on the world¹⁵² – and limbs tired with the fast were once again resting in sleep after singing matins, an old man entering the church saw the blessed elders, and it seemed to him that John and Silvester were standing before the tomb, and they ordered those who were with them, clothed in white robes, to move the tomb, and they shifted it to the place where it is now situated.¹⁵³ And when audaciously he saw what they were doing, he was reproached by John, as he thought: ‘Why’, he said, ‘have you dared to enter the church? But because I know that you made your entry with a sincere heart, go,’ he said, ‘and hurry, so that Leubardinus and the brothers, having been woken, can quickly complete the work that has been started.’ He rushed quickly to abbot Leubardinus, and related the course of events. And he, joyfully, with his companions got up, and having learnt the will and permission that resulted from their own devotion, lifting and moving the tomb, they translated it to the place in which it now stands. It is situated next to the holy altar, as agreed in discussion with the bishops,¹⁵⁴

pp. 1343–44. Mummolus attended the Councils of Mâcon in 583 and 585. It would appear from Jonas’s comments that John’s foundation of Réomé was still a reputable institution in the late sixth century, despite his comments in *VC* I: 5 on the poor state of the Church in Gaul at the time of Columbanus’s arrival. One wonders whether this Mummolus/Mummolinus was related to the Mummolenus of chapter 15.

152 Maurice and the Theban legion were buried at Agaune, where the Burgundian ruler Sigismund established an important royal monastery in 515. Although the cult of Maurice would become significant in Columbanian circles, it was clearly established at Réomé before the arrival of Columbanus in Gaul. John is likely to have introduced the cult shortly after the establishment of Sigismund’s monastery.

153 In his discussion of the miracle, Diem (‘The Rule of an “Iro-Egyptian” Monk in Gaul’, pp. 47–48) notes that the story effectively undermines the notion of the cult of relics: John himself is outside the tomb.

154 As elsewhere in the *VJ* (in contrast to the *VC*) Jonas acknowledges the authority of the bishop in the community.

where the host of Christ is offered and where the office of prayers is fulfilled, and where the cures of the sick, and the consolations of boons for their prayers are granted,¹⁵⁵ [by Christ] to whom is honour and glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

155 Diem, 'The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul', p. 48 implies that the miracles performed in the church are to be associated with the altar and the Eucharist, and not the body of the saint. The *VC* similarly plays down posthumous miracles.

JONAS(?), *THE LIFE OF VEDAST*

HERE BEGINS THE LIFE OF THE HOLY AND MOST BLESSED VEDAST, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR

1. For as long as the glory of holy bishops is to be commended by righteousness (which is always very powerful) and by skilful investigation, either by imitation of their example or by being committed to memory through a sequence of letters,¹ so that it is brightly restored absolutely to the light, may [those bishops] strive to provoke the minds of sinners to the imitation of their cult, so that they may rejoice not only in the profits of reward amply heaped up for themselves, but surely in those gathered for others. The eternal Creator² of all things will be a just judge, so that he, who gave solace to them to increase the abundance of devotion, may not refuse to offer support to his imitators in achieving perfection. Nor should anyone be disdainful if marks of heavenly power are expressed in some things which seem insignificant to men,³ since repeatedly in great and in the smallest things the Just Judge both comes to help in balancing them and

1 Similar words are used by Jonas in the preface to *VC*, which suggests that the *Life of Vedast* is either by Jonas or a close imitator. We have followed the suggestions of GC, ML, and GB in translating this prefatory paragraph. In Krusch's construction of the text there is a lack of coherence (arguably an example of anacoluthon). However, we have tried to clarify the sequence of thought by adopting the MS reading of *commendanda* (in place of Krusch's *commendando*). *Commendanda* can clearly refer to *gloria*: *commendando* has to be understood as echoing *imitando*, but it leaves the initial *gloria* isolated. Veyrard-Cosme, in her translation of Krusch's text (*L'œuvre hagiographique en prose d'Alcuin*, p. 3), adopts a very much freer approach.

2 *Rerum sator aeternus*: cf. the preface to *VC*. The word *sator* is commonly used to refer to God in Late Antique Latin, but it is usually accompanied by a different noun. The phrase *rerum sator* does appear in earlier authors (Arnobius Maior, *Adversus nationes* (I: 34; II: 45) and Pseudo-Hilary, *In Genesim*); Jonas, however, uses the phrase on five other occasions. It is picked up in the *Life of Sadalberga* 5 (ed. Krusch, p. 53; trans. McNamara, p. 182) and in the *Passion of Praeiectus*, praef. (ed. Krusch, p. 226; trans. Fouracre and Gerberding, p. 272).

3 *quae exiguae hominibus videantur*: cf. *VC* 1: 15, *quae parva hominibus videantur*.

in coming to help lends aid so that they become greater things. Therefore, we have decided to commend to posterity the memory of the venerable man Vedast, bishop of the city of Arras;⁴ we attempt to trace in words his origins, and indeed the course of his life, and the nature of his death.

2. So, while Clovis,⁵ the renowned king of the Franks,⁶ was wisely ruling the Franks with diligence, it happened on one occasion that among the fires of wars he advanced to fight against the fierce Alaman people.⁷ When the army on each side had arrived, he wanted to cross the River Rhine, had he not had an army in the way.⁸ And therefore when the battalions of both hosts stood opposite each other, and both the Franks and the Alamans were keen to destroy each other, battle was joined, and such severe terror crept into the soul of Clovis that with fearful anxiety he contemplated an end to the savagery in that battle. And therefore, when he saw his own troops almost driven to destruction, then at last, fortified in spirit by divine help, he turns⁹ his uplifted eyes to heaven. 'O God of singular power and majesty', he said, 'whom Chlothild, my wife, confesses, and whom she

4 *PCBE* IV, 2, pp. 1914–16.

5 Clovis I (r. c.481–511); the *Life* was probably written during or just after the reign of Clovis II (639–57). Clovis I is seen as the unifier of the Franks and also as the first Frankish king to convert to catholic Christianity, not least because of the image of him presented in Gregory of Tours's *DLH*. On Clovis's reign, see Wood, 'Gregory of Tours and Clovis' and Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 41–49; also Becher, *Chlodwig I*. There are valuable contemporary epistolary sources for Clovis's reign translated in Murray, ed. and trans., *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*, pp. 259–71, although this material needs reconsideration in the light of Barrett and Woudhuysen, 'Remigius and the "Important News" of Clovis Rewritten'.

6 *Rex inclitus* is a recurrent phrase in Merovingian political rhetoric.

7 Gregory of Tours, *DLH* II: 30 (trans. Thorpe, p. 143) presents Clovis's battle against the Alamans as the decisive moment of his career, and as the context for the king's conversion to catholic Christianity. He dates the battle to 496, which is almost certainly a decade too early (Wood, 'Gregory of Tours and Clovis'). Despite regular claims to the contrary by modern scholars, Gregory does not place the battle at Tolbiac/Zülpich: the siege of Tolbiac/Zülpich, to which he refers elsewhere (*DLH* II: 37, trans. Thorpe, p. 153) is likely to be a totally different incident. The hagiographer's account is very close to Gregory's, and he may have been using it, but there are no exact verbal borrowings, and the two accounts may, therefore, share a common source.

8 This detail is not in Gregory. Since Zülpich is about 36 km from the river Rhine, Jonas certainly did not see it as the site of Clovis's battle against the Alamans. The author has a habit of setting out the background to an event in more than one way, before getting to the point of the story.

9 The author here appears to use the historic present (*adtollit*), following the reading adopted by Krusch. As Kurt Smolak points out to us, this is particularly significant in that

does not cease to petition with humble prayer night and day, give victory to me today over these enemies, so that I too may then hold and worship you with my believing heart.’¹⁰ When he had petitioned the Author of all things with prayers of this sort, the enemy finally conceded victory to Clovis by turning in flight. The victor then subjected the Alamans and their king to his jurisdiction, and returning rejoicing to his kingdom he came to the city of Toul (see Map 9).¹¹

3. And since he still maintained the desire to take refuge in the grace of baptism,¹² he learnt through inquiry that the blessed Vedast was living there in accordance with the religious life,¹³ and he soon took him as a companion on his journey.¹⁴ While they were travelling together, one day they came to a place called Vieux-Pont in the district of Voncq, near the villa *Riguliacum* on the river Aisne.¹⁵ They came across a blind man, who had been deprived of sight for a period of many years, and he asked blessed Vedast to call upon the help of immense piety, so that at last, through the prayers of Vedast, he might be worthy to receive the light he lacked. Vedast, confident in the mercy of God, raised his right hand and made the

the present tense is not to be found at the equivalent moment in Gregory of Tours’s narrative, which may be the source at this moment.

10 Gregory of Tours, *DLH* II: 29, 31 (trans. Thorpe, pp. 141–45), ascribes to Chlothild a major role in the conversion of Clovis.

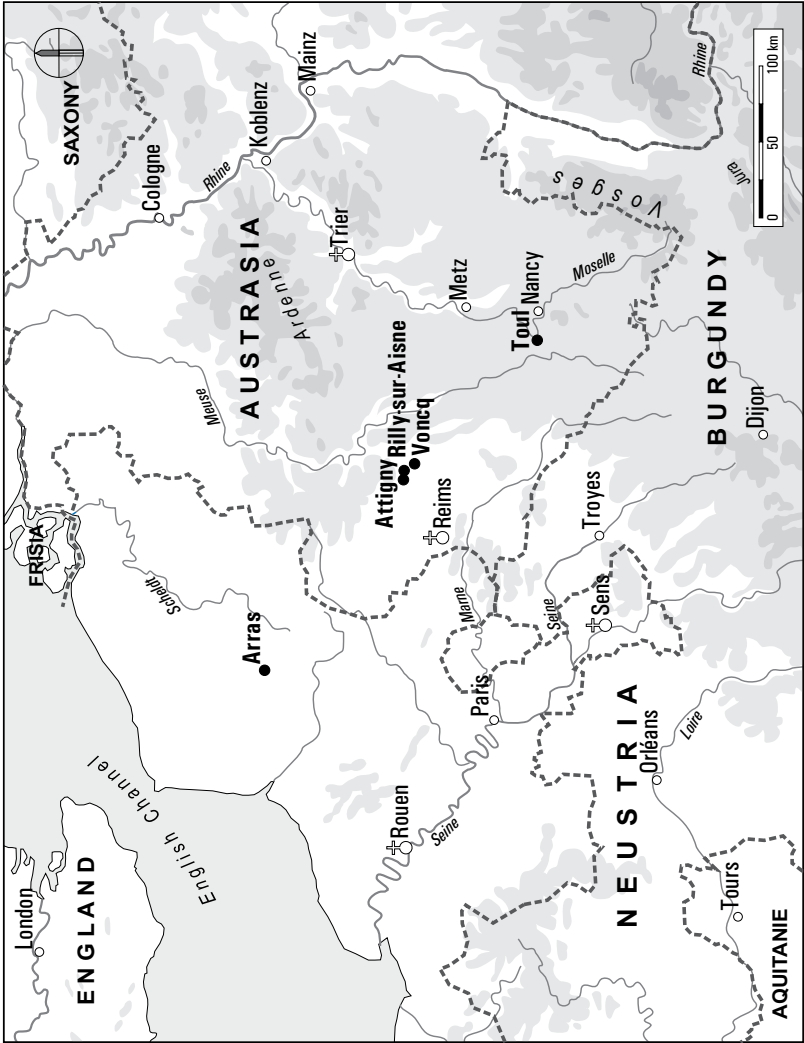
11 This makes it clear that for the author the battle was the point at which Clovis took control of the Alamans, indicating that it was the victory mentioned by Cassiodorus in *Variae* II: 41 (trans. Barnish, pp. 43–50). Neither the author nor Gregory names the Alaman king, although the bishop of Tours (*DLH* II: 30, trans. Thorpe, p. 143) says he was killed in the battle. Gregory says nothing about Clovis’s visit to Toul. The town is situated in eastern France near Nancy (see Map 9). Jonas mentions it in *VC* I: 28 as near the site of the battle between Theuderic II and Theudebert II in 612.

12 In fact, there was almost certainly an interval of over two years between the battle against the Alamans and Clovis’s baptism: Wood, ‘Gregory of Tours and Clovis’; Shanzer, ‘Dating the baptism of Clovis’.

13 Taking *sub cultu religionis* to refer to more than ecclesiastical ritual.

14 Vedast’s role in the conversion of Clovis is not mentioned by Gregory, nor any contemporary source. In his letter to Clovis, written shortly after the king’s baptism, bishop Avitus of Vienne (*Ep.* 46) wrote, ‘Certainly I am not going to preach to you the faith that you saw without a preacher’ (trans. Shanzer and Wood, p. 372). By making Vedast both preacher and catechist the author gives him a leading role in Clovis’s conversion, and by implication that of the Franks.

15 The identifications of Voncq, Vieux-Pont (for Grandepont), and Rilly-sur-Aisne to the north-east of Rheims (and near the royal estate at Attigny) are from Krusch (see Map 9). The very specific topographical detail is typical of Jonas.



Map 9 The World of the *Life of Vedast*. The boundaries are those of 596 (see www.menestrel.fr)

sign of the cross over the man's eyes, and immediately he received the light of sight.¹⁶ It seems that a basilica was built there by Christians, and there many miracles occur in his honour.¹⁷ From there he went to the city of Rheims, to bishop Remigius, who at that time governed the episcopal see there.¹⁸ Having stayed there for a little, Clovis professed his faith in the Holy Trinity, and received baptism. Leaving there and returning to his native land¹⁹ the victor commended Vedast to the blessed Remigius.

4. While he was staying with him and was living in the aforesaid city of Rheims, it happened one day that one of the noblemen²⁰ came to his cell. For he was gentle of mind and eloquent of speech: he knew how to give funds to the poor, to support the downcast with words, and to return the slothful to the norm of sobriety, and he strove to demonstrate the total authority of religion by example and to teach by his words. And therefore when, as we said, a certain nobleman came to him, he conscientiously

16 The miracle of the restoration of sight often has symbolic force, here providing a metaphor for the conversion of Clovis and his people; cf. Constantius, *Vita Germani (Life of Germanus)* 3.15; Wood, 'The End of Roman Britain: Continental Evidence and Parallels', pp. 10–11. A similar miracle is to be found in the *Life of the Bishop of Cambrai (Life of Gaugerio)* 10, written around the same time as the *Life of Vedast*, and in the same region: see Mériaux, 'Une *Vita mérovingienne* et ses lectures du IX^e au XI^e siècle', p. 170.

17 Cf. *VC* I: 30 on the miracles at the ruined basilica in Bobbio.

18 Remigius of Rheims was metropolitan bishop of *Belgica II*, dying in around 532, and certainly before 535: *PCBE* IV, 2, Remigius 2, pp. 1600–04. Gregory of Tours (*LGC* 78; trans. Van Dam, pp. 81–83) claims that some thought that he was bishop for more than seventy years, but he himself seems not to accept that figure, surely correctly. Remigius appears to have been close to the king, and wrote to console him following the death of his sister, Albofledis, who, according to Gregory of Tours, had been baptized at the same time as Clovis (See Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*, no. 40, pp. 263–64). Clovis's baptism, together with more than 3,000 of his army, at Rheims, is famously described by Gregory of Tours (*DLH* II: 31, trans. Thorpe, pp. 143–45). The author of the *Life of Vedast* provides the earliest statement that Clovis was baptized at Rheims: Gregory (*DLH* II: 31) is not specific about the place of baptism. An important contemporary source for Clovis's baptism, which notes that it took place at Christmas, is the letter of bishop Avitus of Vienne, who wrote to the king to congratulate him and to encourage him to convert the still-pagan neighbouring peoples (*Ep.* 46, trans. Shanzer and Wood, pp. 362–73).

19 The notion of *patria* ('homeland') here seems to be very specific: Clovis's father, Childeric, was buried at Tournai, and that seems to have been the original centre of the Merovingian king's power.

20 Technically speaking, in Late Antiquity the phrase *vir inluster* (literally, 'an illustrious man') implies a high member of the aristocratic class. In addition to *inluster*, Jonas uses a range of technical terminology for the Frankish aristocracy in the *VC* (*nobilis vir*, *proceres*, *vir sublimis*).

orders²¹ his servant, after salutary greetings, quickly to bring the man a drink. The servant says that no wine at all remained in the cask from which they were accustomed to draw it. Having heard that, with a groan he looks towards heaven, and he raises his mind on high, so that merciful goodness might quickly come and soon provide a change in this moment of need, according to His custom, as He had changed the flavour of water to wine in Cana in Galilee.²² Soon after he had finished his prayer he urgently orders his servant to go to the cask, and to hurry to bring what the Lord had provided. The assistant went immediately, obediently and quickly, and he found the cask from which he was accustomed to draw wine overflowing.²³ Filled with joy, he brings the gift he had been ordered [to bring], and joyfully delivers news of the overflowing gift. As soon as he heard it, Vedast orders the servant to tell no one of this, and make no public boast, lest the grace of the miracle that had been enacted should stain his mind, and he orders him to shroud the event in silence for as long as he remained among the living.²⁴

5. And when Vedast had achieved the greatest reputation in the aforesaid city of Rheims, and the blessed Remigius was attempting to raise him in respect,²⁵ he decided at last to make him bishop of the city

21 The first of a number of verbs in the historic present. This stylistic feature is common in the works that are known to be by Jonas.

22 John 2. Note that the author makes a subtle, though important, distinction here in his interpretation of the miracle. He does not say that the substance of the water was changed into wine, but only the taste (*aquas in vinum mutavit saporem*). A similar reading is seen in *VC* II: 21, concerning a miracle at Faremoutiers, where water turned into milk. Jonas is careful to make the distinction that it was not the substance of water that changed, but its appearance (*aquae in lactis speciem verteret*). Writing slightly later, around 655, in Ireland, Augustinus Hibernicus gives a similarly rationalist interpretation of the Cana miracle in his work *The Miracles of Sacred Scripture*. While Augustinus Hibernicus is unlikely to have known Jonas's work, both authors may have been influenced by a shared tradition of reading the Bible in a rationalist and literal way. On this rationalist reading of the Bible, see Bracken, 'Rationalism and the Bible in Seventh-Century Ireland'. For further miraculous provision, see Jonas, *VC* I: 17 and *VJ* 13.

23 The miracle of the overflowing vessel is a standard motif in Merovingian hagiography: usually the hagiographer adds a comment that no liquid was spilt.

24 The command that the assistant should not reveal the miracle is standard, and reflects a desire to avoid vainglory: the model is biblical; cf. Mark 1:43–44; Matthew 9:30–31. As elsewhere in Jonas, *superis* here means 'the living'.

25 The clause is *eum venerationis cultu ad tollere niteretur*: the phrase *venerationis cultu* also occurs in a letter concerning the nuns of Poitiers in Gregory of Tours, *DLH* IX: 41 (*adeo reddentes cum venerationis cultu summae aviditatis dilectionis instinctum* (ed. Krusch,

of Arras,²⁶ where he might take care to attract the Frankish people to the grace of baptism little by little by preaching and by diligently admonishing them. Having taken on the responsibility of the episcopal chair, he came to the city of Arras,²⁷ and while he was seeking to go inside the city walls he came across a blind man and a cripple asking for alms. And when he uttered words drawn from the apostolic font, and said that he was hardly loaded with a store of gold and silver,²⁸ they importuned him even more determinedly, and actively strove to extract by force what money he had. He then said to those who were rudely asking for help, 'In place of the gifts of gold and silver, the profusion of divine gift might soon overflow more abundantly if your faith is committed to my will.'²⁹ They said they were ready for everything. 'If your faith is committed to my words', he said, 'the mercy of the Omnipotent will give to each of you your former health.' Vedast then laid his hands on the eyes [of the blind man] and touched the weak limbs [of the lame man] and, having made the sign of the cross, looking up to heaven, secured what he asked for. For immediately both the blind man, receiving his sight, and the lame man, regaining his ability to walk, returned home rejoicing.³⁰

6. And so he came to enter the church. Seeing it uncared for and neglected, through the negligence of the pagan citizens,³¹ overwhelmed by a dense growth of brambles, and polluted with dung as a habitation of beasts, he

p. 469): 'and as a token of the respect and warm brotherly love which we feel for you' (trans. Thorpe, p. 534), where it means no more than 'token of respect'.

26 In canon law a bishop ought to be elected by the clergy and people (although in the Merovingian period kings often intervened in the process): see Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben des Jonas von Susa', p. 431. The only responsibility of the metropolitan was the consecration of the bishop-elect. Krusch explained the action of Remigius by saying that the city had been abandoned. This seems not to have been the case, and – assuming that the account that follows is accurate – the implication of what follows may be that Christianity was not well enough established among the leading Franks of the diocese for an election to take place. Merovingian legislation on episcopal election and consecration is listed by Pontal, *Die Synoden im Merowingerreich*, pp. 226, 228.

27 The use of the verb *venire* ('to come') may imply that the text was written in Arras: this could either imply that Jonas spent some time in the city, which is not impossible, or that the work was written by a local cleric.

28 The reference is to Acts 3:6. The emphasis, for the second time, on his lack of gold may be a deliberate criticism of wealthy clerics.

29 Acts 3:6.

30 Cf. *VC* I: 25.

31 *Paganus* in earlier Latin might mean 'rustic' or 'civilian', as opposed to 'pagan'. Even here it can scarcely be used as evidence that the population of the region was not Christian.

gives his heart over to grief and bends his neck in utter sadness. The city was scarcely crowded with people's dwellings: it had once been destroyed by Attila, king of the Huns, and had been left languishing in squalor.³² And there he found the den of a bear, which he expelled in mental distress from within the city walls, and he ordered it never to cross the stream of the Crinchon, which flows there. And it was never again seen to return there.³³

7. Vedast was welcome at the royal court, but he was not able to draw the Franks entirely from their profane errors, but one by one they were received into the bosom of the Church, as they were subdued to religion through sweet words of admonition. It happened then, once Clovis had died, that his son Chlothar, having been chosen in place of his father, ruled over the Franks.³⁴ And while he ruled the ruling of his realm admirably,³⁵ it happened that a certain Frank, called Hocinus, invited King Chlothar to a banquet, and among the king's courtiers he invited the venerable man bishop Vedast. Although he was surprised, he came to the banquet, not because in consenting to them he would favour his gullet,³⁶ but so he might

32 The destruction of the city envisaged here would have taken place during Attila's campaign of 451, which culminated in his defeat at the Catalaunian Plains. Although the Hunnic army did pass through the region, the dramatic description of the destruction and abandonment of Arras may be an exaggeration, as in the case of Jonas's description of Luxeuil (*VC* I: 10). However, archaeologists have noted that the city was burnt in the mid-fifth century, although they have not been able to assign the fire to Attila's forces rather than to those of the Franks defeated by Aetius at the battle of *Vicus Helena*, near Arras, around 448. On the abandonment of a city due to barbarian invasion as a common literary motif, see Borri, '*Arrivano i barbari a cavallo!*' One might also note that Arras is one of the cities that Jerome claims was destroyed by barbarians in his famous letter (123) to Ageruchia. We have followed GC's advice in our translation.

33 The expulsion of the bear recalls Columbanus's similar miracle in *VC* I: 8. In the late Roman period the extent of the forests was such that wild animals were to be found close to urban settlements. The bones of bears have been discovered from archaeological excavations of this period, and have even been found in an abandoned chapel, so Jonas's account may not be so far-fetched. See Leman, '*Tographe chrétienne d'Arras au VI^e siècle*', p. 175 n. 51, with further references.

34 Chlothar I (r. 511–61) was one of the four sons of Clovis, and the longest surviving. On Clovis's death in 511 his kingdom was divided between his sons: see Wood, '*Kings, Kingdoms and Consent*'. Chlothar's initial powerbase was the city of Soissons, but, taking advantage of the death of his brothers and of his nephew, he extended his power, and by his death in 561 he had reunited the Merovingian kingdom under his sole rule.

35 *Regni regimina reget*: an example of the alliteration and word play that is a distinctive feature of Jonas's style.

36 i.e. 'not out of gluttony', as GC notes.

teach the crowd gathered at the royal banquet with salutary teaching, and because he wished to prompt many to holy baptism, through the king's authority. Entering the house, he sees barrels³⁷ full of beer set out in the house in pagan fashion. Asking about it, he enquired why they wished to have barrels placed in the middle of the house, and the reply was that some were for Christians³⁸ and others indeed were set out for pagans, dedicated in heathen fashion. When this had been explained to him, he zealously blessed all the barrels with the sign of the cross, having called on the name of omnipotent God, as he performed the blessing with the aid of faith³⁹ and with the gift of help from heaven. And as he performed the blessing with the sign of the cross over the barrels which had been consecrated in pagan fashion they suddenly burst from their hoops and spilt all the beery liquid that they contained on the floor.⁴⁰ As a result the king was struck by the miracle, and the whole crowd of nobles asked him to explain openly what was the cause of the event. The venerable man Vedast said to him, 'O king, glory of your Franks, you can see how great is the cunning of diabolic trickery in the deception of the souls of men. For what do you think was the intention of the demons, who strove to subject to eternal death the hearts of the faithless, suffocated with sin,⁴¹ through this liquor, but which has now been thwarted by divine power, with the wiles of the devil routed?⁴² It is necessary for all to know how Christians learn to flee to the salutary

37 It is clear from the fact that the containers were held together by hoops or bands that barrels rather than other vessels are intended: such containers are well known in the archaeological record from the metal bands which bound the staves together, as well as the handles.

38 We have followed Veyrard-Cosme, who in her translation of Krusch's text (*L'œuvre hagiographique en prose d'Alcuin*, p. 8 n. 2) suggests that the Latin *se alia christianis* should be emended to *esse alia christianis*.

39 For *cum fidei adminiculum* read *cum fidei adminiculo*. We thank ML for this suggestion.

40 This beer miracle, another 'drinking' miracle, is very similar to that of Jonas's account of Columbanus's miracle among the Alamans in *VC* I: 27. The miracle account should be understood within the context of other beer miracles in the *VC*, as relating to contemporary elite drinking habits rather than as evidence for pagan rituals, although other contemporary works of hagiography, such as the *Life of Amandus* and the *Life of Eligius*, mention the paganism of the region (but see Hen, 'Paganism and Superstitions in the time of Gregory of Tours'). The miracle account could have been intended to appeal to an elite Frankish audience, where drinking was an important part of maintaining social bonds. For discussion of the story, see Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 33–34; Shanzer, 'Laughter and Humour in the Early Medieval Latin West', p. 43; Nelson, *The Barbarian's Beverage*, pp. 89–90.

41 *Praevaricatio*, which in classical Latin means 'collusion', here has its later meaning of 'sin'.

42 For the drinking of beer dedicated in a pagan rite as a demonic trick, see *VC* I: 27.

medicines⁴³ of true faith and how they strive to ignore the superstitions of the pagans with all their might.' This event contributed towards the salvation of many of those who were present, for many as a result fled to the grace of baptism and bent their necks to holy religion.

8. Vedast ruled⁴⁴ the aforementioned church for a long period of time, about forty years, and when the course of his life had been completed, and God wished to take him from the sorrows of this life to the celestial kingdom, He struck him with fever and foretold his end. For, as he lay in a cell⁴⁵ in the city a column of fire extended down from heaven and touched the roof of the cell with its flame,⁴⁶ and remained there immobile for long period of the night, for almost two hours. When the venerable man heard it, he announced his death, and said farewell to all, and after words of consolation he returned his soul to the Creator, on 6 February.⁴⁷ He made a happy exit from this life, leaving nothing but longing to the living. Many people at this time heard choirs of singers in heaven.⁴⁸

9.⁴⁹ When everyone had heard about the death of the blessed man, clergy came and people, not only from that town, but even bishops and priests from nearby cities, so that they might bear that servant of God, the holy bishop Vedast, to the tomb, as was appropriate. The blessed body was placed in

43 *Salubria medicamenta*: cf. *penitentiae medicamenta* ('the medicines of penance') *VC* I: 15, although here it is not clear that penance is envisaged.

44 As noted by ML, we translate *rex* here (a well-attested variant reading in the apparatus criticus) and not the *erexit* printed by Krusch.

45 Note the ascetic lifestyle that Vedast continued to pursue while a bishop, living in a cell. A small building, contemporary with Vedast's episcopate, which may have served as the episcopal residence and cell, has been discovered adjacent to the cathedral. The building was reused, having originally been the *caldarium*, part of the Roman baths. It has been suggested that this is where Vedast's body was laid out following his death: Leman, 'Togographie chrétienne d'Arras au VI^e siècle', p. 175.

46 Literally 'held its head to the roof'. As noted by ML, *caput tenuit* ('held the head') is a biblical allusion: Colossians 2:19 (*et non tenens caput*).

47 Typically, the author provides the day of death, which would have been liturgically important, but not the year, which would have had no religious significance.

48 The angelic singing can be compared with similar miracles at Faremoutiers in Book Two of the *VC*. In the text printed by Krusch the noun on which the gen. pl. *psallentium* depends has fallen out; the *apparatus criticus* shows that several manuscripts add either *choros* or *voces*. We have translated *choros* here, and are grateful to ML for advice on this point.

49 The concern with the burial and cult of Vedast in this chapter and the following one contrasts markedly with Jonas's lack of information about the death of Columbanus (*VC* I: 30), but there is less contrast with the treatment of the death and burial of John in *VJ* 19–20.

the middle of the house,⁵⁰ as is the custom for everyone, but those taking hold of the bier with the holy body⁵¹ were in no way able to move it from the spot. The venerable man Scupilio, the archpriest of the place,⁵² whom the blessed bishop himself had brought up, was asked what this meant. But he said he did not know. 'However, I do know one thing, that when he was living I often heard him say that no corpse should be laid to rest within the city walls.'⁵³ For the bishop wished to be buried in the oratory that he himself had built out of wooden boards on the bank of the Crinchon.⁵⁴ But neither the place that had been chosen nor the monument seemed to be ready. While discussion of this and of what should be done about it was going on, the venerable man Scupilio, his heart filled with grief, burst into tears and threw himself on his knees over the corpse of the blessed Vedast, and cried out, saying, 'Woe is me, most blessed father. What do you want me to do, for the day is now advanced towards evening, and everyone who has come is in a hurry to return home? Therefore, order us to carry you to the place that we originally prepared for you.' And when he had said this, they picked up the bier on which the earthly body of the saint was lying, and lifted it onto their shoulders, feeling no weight. And carrying it with

50 An interesting comment on the preliminaries to a funeral, there may also be a deliberate echo of the beer barrels set in the middle of the house (*in medio domi*).

51 For *sancto corpus* we follow GC, and read *sancto corpore*.

52 PCBE IV, 2, pp. 1721–22.

53 The episode that follows revolves around an interesting question of burial practice. Burial within city limits was strictly forbidden in Roman law, and it would seem that Vedast himself intended to abide by this legislation. Those who came to bury him obviously had other thoughts, and wished to see him buried in his cathedral church. Eventually, the dead bishop miraculously concedes the point. The story is thus interesting evidence for the shift from an earlier Roman belief-system, which had completely vanished by Jonas's time, and reflects the change to classical topography caused by the cult of saints. A number of necropoleis have been discovered around Arras, which were still in use in the sixth century.

54 The site of this wooden oratory has not been identified, although it is thought to have been just outside the city walls, on the left bank of the Crinchon: it may have been a funerary oratory erected in the middle of a necropolis. Later tradition claimed that the monastery of St-Vaast (which does not appear to have been founded until the end of the seventh century) on the right bank of the Crinchon grew up on the site of the oratory. It is unlikely that the wooden oratory had survived so long, and there may have been an attempt by the monastery to claim continuity with the cult of Vedast. The saint's relics were later translated to the abbey, which grew into an important Carolingian monastery and urban centre, opposite the old Roman *castrum* and cathedral. The abbot of St-Vaast, Rado, asked Alcuin to write a new *Life* of Vedast in around 800. To judge by the alterations he made, Alcuin seems to have found some of the earlier *Life* confusing. See Veyrard-Cosme, *L'œuvre hagiographique en prose d'Alcuin*, pp. 77–107.

a great deal of psalm-singing, they sang, saying 'Walk, saint, the way you have chosen: hurry to the place that has been prepared for you.'⁵⁵ They carried him to a tomb, which was appropriate for a servant of God, inside the church at the righthand corner of the altar, where he himself had carried out the office from his episcopal throne.⁵⁶

10. Now it happened after some time that the very house in which the holy man, bishop Vedast, ended his life⁵⁷ began to burn and flame to consume the whole building, when suddenly it was noticed that the most faithful of the servants of the holy Vedast,⁵⁸ named Habita, evidently saw the fire and beat it back from the cell,⁵⁹ where the bed was in which the saint had died,⁶⁰ and extinguished it entirely. The cell with the bed alone remained unscathed.⁶¹ And therefore the Creator of all things allowed the flames to burn down [the house],⁶² so that he might bequeath to the living

55 Cf. Psalms 32:8; Isaiah 48:17. There is a similar account in Jonas's *VJ* 20, where Jonas recounts how Abbot Leubardinus of Réomé translated the relics of John into the abbatial church. Like Vedast, the saint refused to be moved. The response of the abbot was to order a three-day fast. On the third day, an old man entered the church, and saw a vision of the saint and the second abbot, Silvester, standing in front of the tomb.

56 Traces of the *cathedra* ('episcopal throne') have been discovered from the excavations carried out in Arras cathedral, which have revealed part of the early medieval church, dating to the time of Vedast: Leman, 'Togographie chrétienne d'Arras au VI^e siècle', p. 177.

57 It is impossible to follow the case endings of the Latin in this sentence, which as reconstructed by Krusch does not make grammatical sense. Our translation has drawn on suggestions made by both ML and GC.

58 Veyrard-Cosme, *L'œuvre hagiographique en prose d'Alcuin*, p. 10 n. 3 translates *beato Vedasto* as 'd'auprès du bienheureux Vaast' ('from near the holy Vedast').

59 Krusch's text makes little logical sense: the phrase *ignem ad cellola ... avelleret* ought to mean that Habita 'was beating the fire towards the cell with a broom'. This does not seem likely. We have followed GB who suggests that *ignem ad cellola* should be read as *ignem a cellola*, which is found in some manuscripts. This means that one does not have to follow the emendation of the previous phrase suggested by Veyrard-Cosme, *L'œuvre hagiographique en prose d'Alcuin*, p. 10 n. 4, that *cerneret, et* is a copyist's mistake for *cerneret*.

60 Apparently, the house and the cell mentioned by Jonas are the same building – presumably the small building discovered adjacent to the cathedral. See Leman, 'Togographie chrétienne d'Arras au VI^e siècle', p. 175, with a drawing of the building on p. 182.

61 The reference to the bed-relic and to the little cell indicates that this was one of the *foci* of Vedast's cult at the cathedral, in addition to his tomb shrine. Bed relics are ideal contact relics, and they are a distinctive feature of the cult of the saints in the early Middle Ages, on which, see Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, p. 247.

62 Veyrard-Cosme, *L'œuvre hagiographique en prose d'Alcuin*, p. 12 n. 8 argues that the 'quam', which begins the sentence, refers to the *cellola*. We have followed GB in understanding that it refers to the *domus*.

a monument of his power as an expression of his bounty,⁶³ in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

63 The class B manuscripts diverge at this point by providing some additional information about Vedast's background and place of origin – claiming that he was born in Aquitaine to noble parents. In fact, the name Vedast is Germanic, being cognate with Widogast (who appears in the *Salic Law* (noted by Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben', pp. 434–35)). It is likely that Vedast came from the area around Toul, and that the Carolingian abbey of St-Vaast sought to place Vedast's origins in Aquitaine in order to bolster its property rights in the region (see Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben', pp. 433–34). The interpolation is noted by Krusch, but is confined to his notes, as it is unquestionably a later addition. For discussion, see Krusch, *Ionae Vitae*, pp. 298–300; Krusch, 'Zwei Heiligenleben', pp. 433–34.

APPENDIX 1 TEXTUAL VARIANTS

CHANGES TO *VITA COLUMBANI*

Letter to Waldebert and Bobolenus: we have omitted *Ausoniae*, as do several manuscripts (n. 28: Krusch, p. 148).

In accordance with numerous manuscripts we have omitted *Deo dicati aeterno. Amen* (Krusch, p. 148).

Vita Columbani, Book One

I: 1 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *saeculis refulgentis Columbani* in place of Krusch's preferred *saeculis refulgentem Columbani* (n. 35: Krusch, p. 152).

I: 3 We have followed GB in translating *conspexisset expertus fragilitatem humanam cito ad procliva demergi* (to be found in St Gallen 553) in place of Krusch's *conspexisset, expertus fragilitatis humanae, cito ad procliva labendo dimergi* (n. 60: Krusch, p. 156).

I: 4 We have adopted the reading Congellum in place of Sinilem (n. 29: Krusch, p. 149).

I: 7 We have translated the plural of the chapter heading as a singular (n. 112: Krusch, p. 164).

We have adopted the manuscript reading of *equis* in place of Krusch's preferred *aequitibus* (n. 119: Krusch, p. 165).

I: 15 *Cui sic bestiae ac volucres viri Dei ... sepe vidisse supradictus vir testabatur* (Krusch, pp. 185–86). We have moved this from the end of I: 17 to the end of 1.15 following the Metz manuscript (n. 190).

I: 16 We have followed the Metz manuscript for the opening sentence (n. 191: Krusch, p. 179).

I: 19 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *frusta* in place of Krusch's preferred *frustra* (n. 237: Krusch, p. 189).

We have adopted the manuscript reading of *obtemperantes ... aulici* in place of Krusch's preferred *obtemperantis ... auligae* (n. 241: Krusch, p. 190).

Martyrii coronam a me ... tantum patraret scelus: we have followed Tosi's punctuation (n. 247: Krusch, p. 191).

I: 23 We have removed the comma following *fluctu* to read: *collectoque fluctu in sinibus aequor quievit* (n. 307: Krusch, p. 206).

I: 27 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *ait* in place of Krusch's preferred *aiet* (n. 346: Krusch, p. 213).

I: 30 Chapter heading: Krusch, p. 220, relegated this to a footnote: we have inserted it into the main body of the text (n. 380).

Hymn to be sung at table

We have emended *dignis* to *dictis*, which fits the logic of the sentence (n. 404: Krusch, p. 224, line 9).

Following one manuscript we have translated *Thessaliae* instead of *Aetaliae* (n. 417: Krusch, p. 225, line 13).

We have emended *regis* to *reges* (n. 426: Krusch, p. 226, line 10).

Hymn for the feast of Columbanus's death

We have accepted the reading of the Metz manuscript (*Gloria tibi, Domine, Gloria Unigenito, Una cum Sancto Spiritu, In sempiterna saecula*), in place of *Gloria tibi Trinitas, Aequalis una deitas, Et ante omnia saecula, Et nunc et in perpetuum* (n. 453: Krusch, p. 228, lines 13–16).

Vita Columbani, Book Two

II: 2 We have emended *fluenta* to *fluentia* (n. 484: Krusch, p. 234).

We have adopted the manuscript reading of *ales* in place of Krusch's preferred *alis* (n. 485: Krusch, p. 234): one might equally take the alternative manuscript reading of *avis*.

We have adopted the manuscript reading of *oboederint* in place of Krusch's preferred *oboedire* (n. 486: Krusch, p. 234).

We have adopted the manuscript reading of *spectabat* in place of Krusch's preferred *expectabat* (n. 487: Krusch, p. 234).

We have adopted the manuscript reading of *macularet* in place of Krusch's preferred *macularent* (n. 489: Krusch, p. 234).

II: 3 We have emended *frustra* to *frusta* (n. 496: Krusch, p. 235).

II: 4 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *audito ... adventu* in place of Krusch's *audito ... adventum* (n. 498: Krusch, p. 235).

We have emended *noxia* to *noxius: suppressas ... auras* to *suprema ... aura: favores* to *favoris*: all three variants are attested in the manuscripts (nn. 500–01: Krusch, p. 236).

II: 6 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *extersit* in place of Krusch's preferred *extendit* (n. 517: Krusch, p. 239).

We have emended *a caelestia munera* to *a caelesti munere* (n. 520: Krusch, p. 239).

II: 8 We have added the names of Bobo and Odo from the Metz MS (n. 547).

II: 10 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *suae paci* in place of Krusch's preferred *suae pacis*, and of *maxime* in place of *maxima* (nn. 613–14: Krusch, p. 256).

II 16: We have adopted the manuscript reading of *hae vero quae viderant* in place of Krusch's preferred *hae vero qui viderant* (n. 677: Krusch, p. 267).

II: 23 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *moderante* in place of Krusch's preferred *moderantem* (n. 766: Krusch, p. 281).

We have emended *discerpendo* to *disserpendo*: one manuscript offers *disserpendo* (n. 777: Krusch, p. 285).

We have emended *seva peste exire ab hominem fecit* to *sevam pestem exire ab homine fecit*: each of the changes has manuscript support (n. 779: Krusch, p. 285).

II: 24 We have emended *optabam* to *optarem* (n. 785: Krusch, p. 286).

CHANGES TO *VITA IOHANNIS*

Praefatio We have emended *urbem* to *orbem* (n. 12: Krusch, p. 326).

5 We have emended *sub regulare tenore* to *sub regule tenore*, following a suggestion of Albrecht Diem (n. 65: Krusch, p. 332).

7 We have emended *curruit* to *corruit* (n. 75: Krusch, p. 333).

8 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *insperato* in place of Krusch's preferred *inspiratu* (n. 80: Krusch, p. 334).

13 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *copiam* in place of Krusch's preferred *cupies* (n. 101: Krusch, p. 336).

We have emended *ille* to *illi* (n. 102: Krusch, p. 336).

14 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *a cellula sua* in place of Krusch's preferred *ad cellula sua* (n. 106: Krusch, p. 337).

We have adopted the manuscript reading of *citoque* in place of Krusch's preferred *ascitoque* (n. 107: Krusch, p. 337).

16 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *pulsaretur* in place of Krusch's preferred *pulsaret* (n. 122: Krusch, p. 339).

We have adopted the manuscript reading of *mirando facto* in place of Krusch's preferred *mirandi facta* to (n. 122: Krusch, p. 339).

19 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *portabat* in place of Krusch's preferred *pollebat* (n. 147: Krusch, p. 342).

CHANGES TO *VITA VEDASTIS*

1 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *commendanda* in place of Krusch's preferred *commendando* (n. 1: Krusch, p. 309).

7 We have followed Veyrard-Cosme in emending *se alia christianis* to *esse alia christianis* (n. 38: Krusch, p. 315).

We have adopted the manuscript reading of *cum fidei adminiculo* rather than Krusch's preferred *cum fidei adminiculum* (n. 39: Krusch, p. 315).

8 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *rexit* rather than Krusch's preferred *erexit* (n. 44: Krusch, p. 316).

Following the evidence of several manuscripts we have supplied a noun (*choros/voces*) to accompany the genitive plural *psallentium* (n. 48: Krusch, p. 316).

10 We have adopted the manuscript reading of *ignem a cellola* rather than Krusch's preferred *ignem ad cellola* (n. 59: Krusch, p. 318).

APPENDIX 2 DISTRIBUTION OF BIBLICAL QUOTATIONS AND ALLUSIONS IN JONAS'S HAGIOGRAPHICAL WORKS

COMPILED BY ALBRECHT DIEM

<i>Biblical books</i>	<i>Quotations</i>	<i>Allusions</i>
Genesis 3:6		<i>VC I</i> : 3
Genesis 12:1	<i>VC I</i> : 4	
Genesis 8:6–7		<i>VC I</i> : 15
Genesis 4:8		<i>VC II</i> : 9
Genesis 3:1–24		<i>VC II</i> : 22
Exodus 16:13		<i>VC I</i> : 27
Exodus 4:10		<i>VC II</i> : 9
Exodus 14:19–20		<i>VC II</i> : 20
Exodus 15:1	<i>VC II</i> : 20	
Numbers 20:7–11		<i>VC I</i> : 9
Deuteronomy 34:7		<i>VJ</i> 19
Deuteronomy 8:3		<i>VC I</i> : 6
Joshua 6:5		<i>VJ</i> 18
Judges 5:31	<i>VC I</i> : 2	
Judges 16:4–21		<i>VC I</i> : 3
1 Samuel 11:2–27		<i>VC I</i> : 3
1 Kings 11:1–8		<i>VC I</i> : 3
1 Kings 16–21		<i>VC I</i> : 18
1 Kings 13:4		<i>VC I</i> : 20
1 Kings 12–14		<i>VC I</i> : 22

<i>Biblical books</i>	<i>Quotations</i>	<i>Allusions</i>
2 Kings 9:30–37		<i>VC</i> I: 18
2 Kings 6:18		<i>VC</i> I: 20
2 Kings 1:13–14		<i>VC</i> I: 20
2 Kings 1:9		<i>VC</i> I: 20
2 Kings 1:13–14		<i>VC</i> I: 20
2 Kings 4:29		<i>VC</i> II: 22
Job 26:13	<i>VJ</i> II: 6	
Job 26:13		<i>VC</i> II: 10
Job		<i>VC</i> II: 13
Psalms 54:23	<i>VJ</i> 8	
Psalms 118:20	<i>VJ</i> 18	
Psalms 118:127	<i>VJ</i> 18	
Psalms 94:1–2	<i>VJ</i> 18	
Psalms 94:6–7	<i>VJ</i> 18	
Psalms 80:11	<i>VC</i> I: 3	
Psalms 77:19–20		<i>VC</i> I: 7
Psalms 69:2	<i>VC</i> I: 8	
Psalms 77:24		<i>VC</i> I: 11
Psalms 36:25	<i>VC</i> I: 17	
Psalms 77:19		<i>VC</i> I: 17
Psalms 16:8		<i>VC</i> I: 23
Psalms 77:24	<i>VC</i> I: 27	
Psalms 91:13		<i>Versus ... ad mensam</i>
Psalms 23:1		<i>Versus ... ad mensam</i>
Psalms 83:7		<i>VC</i> II: 6
Psalms 120:7–8	<i>VC</i> II: 9	
Psalms 135:1–2	<i>VC</i> II: 13	
Psalms 50:9–10	<i>VC</i> II: 14	
Psalms 83:8	<i>VC</i> II: 25	
Song of Solomon 5:2	<i>VJ</i> 16	

<i>Biblical books</i>	<i>Quotations</i>	<i>Allusions</i>
Sirach 34:23	<i>VC</i> I: 19	
Sirach 12:14		II: 10
Isaiah 60:8	<i>VJ</i> Preface	
Isaiah 58:7	<i>VJ</i> 13	
Isaiah 3:12	<i>VC</i> , <i>Ep.</i> to Waldebert ...	
Isaiah 66:2	<i>VC</i> I: 5	
Isaiah 5:20	<i>VC</i> II: 10	
Jeremiah 1:6	<i>VC</i> II: 9	
Daniel 2:32–40		<i>Versus ... ad mensam</i>
Daniel 4:12–30		II: 22
Matthew 9:30		<i>VV</i> 4
Matthew 20:23		<i>VJ</i> 2
Matthew 10:37	<i>VJ</i> 6	
Matthew 5:3	<i>VJ</i> 8	
Matthew 5:6	<i>VJ</i> 8	
Matthew 13:43	<i>VC</i> I: 2	
Matthew 10:37	<i>VC</i> I: 3	
Matthew 11:29–30	<i>VC</i> I: 4	
Matthew 17:19	<i>VC</i> I: 9	
Matthew 14:17–21		<i>VC</i> I: 17
Matthew 12:39–41		<i>VC</i> I: 23
Matthew 7:24		<i>Versus ... ad mensam</i>
Matthew 17:9		<i>VC</i> II: 2
Matthew 26:14–16		<i>VC</i> II: 9
Matthew 16:18	<i>VC</i> II: 9	
Matthew 10:22		<i>VC</i> II: 9
Matthew 26:41	<i>VC</i> II: 9	
Matthew 6:12	<i>VC</i> II: 12	
Matthew 10:37–40		<i>VC</i> II: 23
Mark 1: 43–44		<i>VV</i> 4

<i>Biblical books</i>	<i>Quotations</i>	<i>Allusions</i>
Mark 1:20		<i>VJ</i> 2
Mark 11:24	<i>VC</i> I: 9	
Mark 7:33		<i>VC</i> I: 15
Mark 1:10		<i>VC</i> II: 6
Luke 1:80	<i>VJ</i> 2	
Luke 6:30	<i>VJ</i> 13	
Luke 12:49	<i>VJ</i> 18	
Luke 9:62		<i>VC</i> I: 3
Luke 9:23		<i>VC</i> I: 4
Luke 12:49	<i>VC</i> I: 4	
Luke 14:11	<i>VC</i> I: 5	
Luke 9:23	<i>VC</i> I: 6	
Luke 1:5–25		<i>VC</i> I: 14
Luke 6:38	<i>VC</i> II: 12	
John 2		<i>VV</i> 4
John 15:5		<i>VC</i> I: 2
John 4:52–53		<i>VC</i> I: 7
John 13:4–5		<i>VC</i> I: 19
John 5:1–5		<i>Versus ... ad mensam</i>
Acts 3:6		<i>VV</i> 5
Acts 9:15	<i>VJ</i> Preface	
Acts 4:32		<i>VC</i> I: 5
Acts 4:32		<i>VC</i> I: 10
Acts 16:28		<i>VC</i> I: 19
Acts 7:55–56		<i>VC</i> II: 6
Ephesians 6:16–17		<i>VJ</i> 3
Ephesians 4:28	<i>VJ</i> 8	
Ephesians 6:17		<i>VC, Ep. to Waldebert ...</i>
Ephesians 6:13–17		<i>VC</i> I: 3
Ephesians 2:20		<i>Versus ... ad mensam</i>

<i>Biblical books</i>	<i>Quotations</i>	<i>Allusions</i>
Ephesians 4:26–7		<i>VC</i> II: 6
1 Corinthians 15:45–7		<i>VC</i> II: 6
1 Corinthians 3:13	<i>VC</i> II: 10	
1 Corinthians 14:20		<i>VC</i> II: 25
Romans 12:12		<i>VC</i> II: 13
2 Thessalonians 3:10	<i>VJ</i> 18	
Colossians 2:19		<i>VV</i> 8
1 Peter 2:6		<i>Versus ... ad mensam</i>
Revelation 1:16		<i>VC</i> I: 3
Revelation 21:18–21		<i>Versus ... ad mensam</i>

APPENDIX 3 PARALLELS BETWEEN REGULA CUIUSDAM AD VIRGINES AND JONAS'S HAGIOGRAPHICAL WORKS

COMPILED BY ALBRECHT DIEM

<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani, Vita Iohannis, or Vita Vedastis</i>	
1.1: <i>genere quam sapientia et sanctitate nobilis</i>	VC II: 1, p. 230.10–11: <i>ex Burgundionorum genere, nobilis natione sed nobilior sanctitate.</i>	combination of <i>genus</i> , <i>nobilitas</i> , and <i>sanctitas</i> appears about 10 times before Jonas, mostly in works of Augustine and Jerome
1.3: <i>quam doctrinae inlatae aurem adcommodant</i>	VC prol.: <i>cytharae melos aures oppletas, mollis saepe avenae modulamini</i>	common
3.1: <i>aurem adcommodant</i>	<i>auditum accommodare</i>	
3.13: <i>aurem accomodent</i>	I: 3, p. 156.20: <i>aurem accommodas</i> I: 15, p. 177.6–7: <i>aurem pietatis accomodare</i> VC II: 4: <i>qui se suorum ad petitiones famulorum peitatis suae accomodat aures</i> II: 9, pp. 12–13: <i>ad fragiles turbarum aures fragilem mentem accomodaret</i>	

<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani, Vita Iohannis, or Vita Vedastis</i>	
1:13: <i>saniae antidoti</i>	<i>VC II: 1: pia fomenta praebere et salutaris antidoti, quo sanies putrefacta abscideretur VJ 2, p. 330.13–14: celestis antidoti pocula prebendam quo peccatorum sanies pelleretur.</i>	exclusive
1.9: <i>sic delinquentium ignauiam corrigit</i>	<i>VC II: 10, p. 254.4: correctio delinquentium II: 10, p. 256.10–11: corrigerere delinquentes</i>	c.40 times before Jonas, mostly in texts of Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory the Great (<i>PL</i> database)
1.9: <i>ad cultum religionis</i> 24.5: <i>cultum instruantur religionis</i> ; De acc. 1: <i>ad cultum religionis</i>	<i>VC I: 5, p. 162.12: omnium animos ad religionis cultum defigeret I: 10, p. 169.19–20: cultui religionis II: 11, p. 259.15–16: ad cultum religionis II: 12, p. 259.28: cultui religionis; II: 23, p. 280.18: ad cultum religionis; VJ 1, p. 328.17: cultuque religionis; 1, p. 329.3: cultus religionis cathenatos; VV 3, p. 311.5: sub religionis cultu</i>	common. I would nevertheless make a remark: <i>cultus religionis</i> in both texts is an all-encompassing term for monastic life
1.11: <i>Bonitatem et disciplinam et scientiam doce me, domine.</i>	<i>VC II: 23, p. 281.24: Cum iam egregiis moribus, bonitate et disciplina, scientiam moderantem, plebem regeret.</i>	otherwise almost exclusively in commen- taries on the Psalms
1.18: <i>mercedis recipiat lucra</i>	<i>VV 1, p. 309.8: mercedis lucra</i>	appears occasionally

<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani, Vita Iohannis, or Vita Vedastis</i>	
1.19: <i>praesentis uitae</i>	VC II: 6, p. 228.22; II: 11, p. 259.9; II: 12, p. 260.29–30 etc.; VJ 6, p. 333.3–4.	common
2.4: <i>correptione pia</i>	VC II: 10, p. 251.30: <i>piis correptionibus</i>	exclusive
2.5: <i>arrogantiae uitio maculata</i>	VC II: 1, p. 232.11–12: <i>arrogantiae uitio maculati</i> I: 5, p. 161.23: <i>vitium arrogantiae ac elationis</i> II: 17, p. 268.8: <i>per elationis ac arrogantiae vitium</i>	<i>arrogantiae uitio maculata</i> : exclusive <i>arrogantiae vitium</i> : very rare
2.12: <i>corda subditarum (...) excitando erigat.</i>	VC II: 1, p. 231, 8–9: <i>corda subditarum</i> VC I: 22, p. 205.1: <i>corda excitare</i>	<i>corda subditarum</i> : rare, but several times in the works of Gregory the Great; <i>corda excitare</i> : common
2.15: <i>fructum laboris recipiat</i>	VJ 1, p. 22: <i>laboris fructus reciperet</i> VC II: 6, p. 240.13: <i>fructus recipiant vitae aeternae</i>	about 5 times prior to Jonas (<i>PL</i> database)
2.16: <i>sine commeatu</i> 3.11: <i>sine commeatu abbatissae facere praesumant</i> 4.11: <i>sine commeatu</i>	VC I: 15, p. 178.21: <i>qui sine comeatu aliquid adtingere presumpsisset</i>	<i>sine commeatu</i> appears occasionally in classical texts, later in charters and capitularies. Only exception: Second Council of Arles, c. 18: <i>sine commeatu concilii ipsius discedere fortasse praesumpserit ...</i>
3.1: <i>ex praesentibus pompis</i>	VC I: 10, p. 169.23: <i>praesentium pompam</i>	exclusive

<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani, Vita Iohannis, or Vita Vedastis</i>	
3.1: <i>omnium simul</i> ; 3.12: <i>omnis simul</i> ; 11.6: <i>simul omnes</i> ; 18.2: <i>simul ab omni congregatione</i> .	<i>VC I</i> : 5, p. 162.3: <i>simul omnes</i>	common
3.3: <i>faleramenta</i>	<i>VC Prol.</i> , p. 146.4 <i>I</i> : 10, p. 169.23 <i>I</i> : 14, p. 176.15 <i>II</i> : 1, p. 230.18 <i>II</i> : 9, p. 246.23 <i>II</i> : 12, p. 260.4	probably neologism of Jonas; appears later occasionally in hagiographical texts, e.g. <i>Vita Sadalbergae</i> .
3.6: <i>consodales</i>	<i>VJ 9</i> , p. 334.26: <i>consodales</i>	roughly 5 times before Jonas
3.6: <i>intente aspiciant</i>	<i>VC I</i> : 17, p. 183.2–3: <i>intentis oculis</i>	
3.11: <i>sine commeatu abbatissae facere praesumant</i>		once: Second Council of Arles, c. 18
3.12: <i>omnis simul congregatio</i>	<i>VC I</i> : 20, p. 194.27: <i>cum omni congregatione</i> ;	<i>ab omni congregatione obiurgarentur</i> : exclusive
4.1: <i>ex omni congregatione</i>	<i>II</i> : 19, p. 273.21: <i>ab omni congregatione obiurgarentur</i>	
4.6: <i>congregationi omni</i>		
18.3: <i>ab omni congregatione obiurgetur</i>		
20.7: <i>ab omni congregatione</i>		

<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani, Vita Iohannis, or Vita Vedastis</i>	
3.16: <i>contumacie crimen incurrit</i> 5.14: <i>crimen incurrat</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 16, p. 267.15: <i>contumaciae crimen incurere</i>	also in <i>Regula coenobialis</i> , 1 and Columbanus, <i>Ep.</i> I; once in Petrus Chrysologus. The expression <i>crimen contumaciae</i> is rare. <i>incurrere</i> appears 7 times in <i>Regula cuiusdam</i> and 5 times in <i>VC</i> . See also 4.16 on <i>neglegentiae damna incurrat</i> rare
3.21: <i>hora refectiois</i> 11.4: <i>refectiois hora</i>	6 times in <i>VC</i>	common, also in monastic rules
3.23 /20.9 /21.1 /21.2: <i>septa monasterii</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 20, p. 194.2; II: 19, p. 271.28: <i>septa monasterii</i> , also <i>septa secretiora</i> ; <i>septa caenubii</i>	<i>septa monasterii</i> appears occasionally in older texts, especially in acts of councils
3.25: <i>habentes regulae tenorem conseruent</i> 15.12: <i>regulae tenori subiacere</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 13, p. 262.1–2: <i>contra tenorem regulae</i> <i>VJ</i> 2: <i>sub regulae tenore</i> ; 19, 342: 21: <i>forma regule tenore per vestigia magisti gradiens</i>	3 times before Jonas rare
4.7: <i>pro affectu et materno</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 7, p. 241.2: <i>paterno affectu et aequo iure</i> II: 10: <i>et ille paterno affectu labentem piis correptionibus foveret</i>	common, but see <i>Regula cuiusdam</i> 2.4 on <i>correptione pia</i>
4.11: <i>cum uoce humilitatis</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 3, p. 156.3 and I: 22, p. 202.7: <i>humili uoce</i>	common

<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani, Vita Iohannis, or Vita Vedastis</i>	
4.16: <i>neglegentiae damna incurrat</i>	<i>VJ</i> 7, p. 333.12–13: <i>negligentiae damnum</i> <i>VC</i> II: 17, p. 268.21–22: <i>ne negligentia tepiditatis pariat damna vitae aeternae</i> <i>VC</i> II: 12, p. 261.18: <i>damna incurrat</i> <i>VC</i> II: 13, p. 263.9–10: <i>damni incurreret</i>	<i>damnum negligentiae</i> : exclusive; <i>damnum incurrere</i> : common
5.9: <i>diligatur puritate, diligatur religione</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 25, p. 291.29: <i>eius puritatis et religionis in omnibus imitatores essent</i>	<i>Puritas religionis</i> appears occasionally. Otherwise the combination of <i>puritas</i> and <i>religio</i> is extremely rare
5.11: <i>numquam peccati maculam incurret</i>	<i>VJ</i> 16: <i>contagione peccatorum maculatus</i>	Common. <i>Macula</i> and <i>maculare</i> appear 7 times in <i>Regula cuiusdam</i> , 21 times in <i>VC</i> and twice in <i>VJ</i>
5.11: <i>cultu pietatis ac dilectionis ornata</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 11: <i>pietatis cultus</i> II: 13, p. 262.29: <i>cultus pietatis</i>	<i>Cultus pietatis</i> appears rarely before Jonas
5.11: <i>aeterna praemia accipiet</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 10, pp. 169.23–170.1: <i>exsperta faleramenta saeculi et praesentium pompa facultatum temnentes, aeterna praemia caperent</i>	common, but cf. 3.1 and 3.6.
5.12: <i>antiqui hostis</i> 14.8: <i>antiquus hostis</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 3, p. 155.20: <i>antiquus hostis.</i>	common
5.16: <i>discordiae fomenta</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 10, p. 253.29: <i>discordiae fomitem</i>	both variants appear about 10 times before Jonas
5.21: <i>iurgiorum incrementa</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 1, p. 231.28: <i>iurgiorum incrementa</i>	exclusive

<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani, Vita Iohannis, or Vita Vedastis</i>	
6.1: <i>scripturarum series</i>	VC I: 3, p. 156.9 and	common
9.1: <i>scripturarum series</i>	II: 9, p. 250.15–16: <i>scripturarum series</i>	
6.6: <i>Confessus se aduersum</i>	VC I: 19: <i>se adversum</i> II: 12, p. 261: <i>te adversum</i>	<i>se adversum</i> appears 14 times before Jonas, <i>te adversum</i> 7 times.
6.15: <i>clementis iudicis pietas</i>	VC I: 4, p. 160.10–11; II: 11, p. 258.17: <i>clemens iudex</i>	Three instances before Jonas rare
<i>De acced. 26: clemens iudex</i>		
6.20: <i>mens uel caro per fragilitatem deliquerit</i>	VC II: 16, p. 267.14: <i>mens fragilitate corrupta</i>	appears occasionally before Jonas rare
6.21: <i>mens maculae adtraxerit</i>	II: 19, p. 272.25: <i>qualem-cumque rugam mens fragilitate adtraxisse</i>	
6.23: <i>peracta oratione</i>	VJ 2, p. 330.6–7: <i>oratione peracta</i> 7, p. 333.17: <i>peracta oratione</i> 13, p. 337.9: <i>peractaque oratione</i>	Three instances before Jonas
6.26: <i>supra humum prostratae</i>	VC I: 21, p. 200.12–14: <i>supra humum iacuit</i>	common
22.18: <i>supra humum</i>	II: 3, p. 235.6–7: <i>ad humo prostratus prodit</i> II: 7, p. 242: <i>prostratus itaque humo</i>	
7.1: <i>iustus iudex</i>	VC I: 28, p. 219.3; II: 10, p. 251.25; II: 10, p. 256.22; II: 19, p. 274.27; II: 24, p. 288.16: <i>iustus iudex</i>	common, based on Psalms 7, 12 and 2 Timothy 4, 8

<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani, Vita Iohannis, or Vita Vedastis</i>	
7.2: <i>ad salutem redintegrandam</i>	VC II: 6: <i>et veteres maculas delens, omnia saluti redintegraret</i> I: 7, p. 166.5–6: <i>ob sanitatem redintegrandam</i> II: 8, p. 245.4: <i>redintegravit ergo divina pietas</i>	exclusive
7.6: <i>quae hunc propositum regulae uiolare conetur</i>	VC I: 19, p. 190.18: <i>Si, quod nunc usque sub regularis disciplinae abenis constructum fuit, violare conaris</i>	<i>regulam violare</i> 12 times before Jonas <i>regulam violare conari</i>
10.18: <i>disciplina regulae</i>		exclusive
12.12: <i>Nam si uiolatrix huius regulae</i>	VC II: 9: <i>adversantes sanctae regulae</i>	
17.12: <i>disciplinae regulari</i>	VC II: 25, p. 291.30–31: <i>sub regularis disciplinae norma eruditus</i>	
18.1: <i>sanctae regulae normam uiolare</i>	VJ 3, p. 330.25: <i>regularis materiae normam;</i> VJ 4, p. 331.1–2: <i>religionis forma plures instruebat et regularis discipline normam tenere eos commonebat</i>	
8.3: <i>eius gratias referendas</i>	VC II: 4, p. 236.11–12: <i>Grates simul parentes Conditori referunt, qui sic suorum ad petitiones famulorum pietatis suae accommodat aures.</i> II: 6, p. 239.24: <i>Gratias deinde refert omnipotenti</i>	common, but cf. <i>Regula cuiusdam</i> 1.3; 3.1; 3.13 on <i>aurem adcommodare</i>
8.5: <i>uerecundiae metu</i>	VC II: 10, p. 252.9–10: <i>uerecundiae metu</i> II: 17, p. 269.24–25: <i>Perculsa metu, uerecundia correpta</i>	exclusive

<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani, Vita Iohannis, or Vita Vedastis</i>	
8.9: <i>illa in ecclesia pro ipsa tarditate posita</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 17, p. 184.13 and I: 20, p. 194.26: <i>in ecclesia positum</i> I: 28, p. 217.18: <i>in ecclesia positum</i> . <i>Positus</i> appears 13 times in <i>Rcui</i> and 17 times in <i>VC</i>	common
9.8: <i>necessitas monasterii</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 30, p. 222.18: <i>ad monasterii necessitatem</i>	common in monastic rules
9.10: <i>pro communi necessitate</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 7, p. 241.3: <i>pro communi necessitate</i>	once in Gregory; once in Cassian
10.18: <i>temeritatis audacia</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 10, p. 251.24: <i>temeritatis audaciam</i>	about 10 times before Jonas
11.3: <i>labor grandis</i> <i>De acced</i> .8: <i>labor grandis</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 9, p. 168.11: <i>labor grandis</i>	common
11.3: <i>aut hospitum non cogat aduentus</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 19, p. 190.14: <i>hospitum adventus</i>	very rare, once in <i>RM</i> rare
12.1: <i>necessitatis usus</i>	<i>VJ</i> 4, p. 331.9–10: <i>in operis necessarii usus cerneret laborare</i>	common
12.2: <i>detur intentio</i>	<i>VJ</i> 12, p. 336.12–13: <i>intentionem dedit</i>	exclusive the terms <i>intentus</i> and <i>intentio</i> appear 6 times in <i>Regula cuiusdam</i> , 19 times in <i>VC</i> , twice in <i>VJ</i> and 4 times in <i>De accedendo</i>
12.6: <i>propter feruentem aestum</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 4, p. 160.17: <i>ferventi aestu</i>	occasionally in Jerome and Augustine, rare
12.15: <i>omnipotentis dei misericordia</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 4, p. 160.8: <i>omnipotentis misericordiam</i>	common
13.2: <i>sollicitudo animi uigeat</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 19, p. 190.10: <i>animo vicens</i>	common
13.5: <i>iudicium damnationis</i>	<i>VJ</i> 4, p. 332.4: <i>iudicium damnationis</i>	common

<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani, Vita Iohannis, or Vita Vedastis</i>	
14.4: <i>subiecta membra</i>	<i>VJ</i> 3, p. 330.30: <i>subiecta membra</i> .	about five instances before Jonas
14.9: <i>de cuius relegione non dubitetur</i> ; 24.9: <i>de quorum religione non dubitatur</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 10, p. 170.10: <i>de quorum religione nihil dubitabatur</i> ; II: 5, p. 237.25–26: <i>de quorum religioni nihil dubitabatur</i>	exclusive
14.15: <i>signum crucis fronti inferatur</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 8, p. 166.19: <i>frontem signo crucis armans</i>	common
16.3/ 20.13/ 24.3: <i>aetas tenera</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 8, p. 244.30; II: 13, p. 262.15: <i>aetas tenera</i>	common
17.12; 18.3; 18.4; 20.1; 20.2: <i>emendare noluerit</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 19, p. 189: <i>emendare dilatando non velit</i>	common
18.3: <i>ab omni congregatione obiurgetur</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 19, p. 273.21: <i>ab omni congregatione obiurgarentur</i>	exclusive
18.5: <i>obstinatae et durae mentis</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 21, p. 277.18–278.1: <i>durae ac ignavae mentis</i> II: 10, p. 252.2: <i>si misera mens duritiam vecordiae molliret</i>	common
20.4: <i>moderante ergo scientia</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 23, p. 281.24: <i>scientiam moderantem</i>	exclusive
20.5: <i>per fomenta castigationum et piaetatis</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 1, p. 231.11–12: <i>pia fomenta praebere et salutaris antidoti</i>	exclusive
20.5: <i>sospitati non redditur</i>	<i>Sosiptati reddere</i> appears 10 times in <i>VC</i> , twice in <i>VJ</i> , once in <i>VV</i>	c.15 times before Jonas
20.7: <i>communis dominus orationum officio deprecetur</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 9, p. 168.16–17: <i>orationibus Dominum deprecatur</i>	common

<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani, Vita Iohannis, or Vita Vedastis</i>	
21.1: <i>emendationem polliceri</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 1, p. 232.7–8: <i>emendaturos pollicentur</i> ; II: 13, p. 263.29: <i>emendaturam pollicetur</i>	about 10 times before Jonas rare
21.1: <i>perculsa timore</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 23, p. 284.12–13: <i>timore percussus</i>	common
21.5: <i>in postmodum denegandum</i>	<i>in postmodum</i> 3 times in <i>VC</i>	roughly 25 times before Jonas
22.2: <i>pro parte</i>	<i>VC</i> Prol., p. 147.15; I: 9, p. 168.4: <i>pro parte</i>	common
22.5: <i>purissimum patefacient affectum</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 4, p. 159.14–15: <i>ardentem patri patefaciebat affectum</i>	twice before Jonas
22.10/ 16/ 20/ 22/ 24: <i>cum omni humilitate</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 18, p. 186.11–12: <i>omni cum humilitate</i>	common
22.22: <i>sub silenti uoce</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 9, p. 168.10: <i>Sub silentii voce</i>	exclusive
22.23: <i>modestia ac sobriaetate</i>	<i>VC</i> I: 5, p. 161.21–21: <i>modestia atque sobrietas</i>	c.10 times before Jonas
23.1: <i>proximam uel consanguineam</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 12, p. 259.24: <i>erat enim ei consanguinitate proxima</i> II: 9, p. 248.18: <i>qui consanguinitatis proximus erat</i>	common
23.3: <i>quae iam sibi non uiuit, sed christo, quem imitata manet crucifixa</i>	<i>VC</i> II: 13, p. 263.24: <i>ut quae crucifixae mundo Christo, non sibi vivunt.</i>	exclusive

APPENDIX 4 PARALLELS BETWEEN DE ACCEDENDO (RULE FRAGMENT ON PRAYER), REGULA CUIUSDAM AD VIRGINES, AND JONAS'S HAGIOGRAPHICAL WORKS

COMPILED BY ALBRECHT DIEM

<i>De accedendo</i>	<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani or Vita Iohannis</i>
1: <i>ad cultum religionis</i>	c. 1.9: <i>ad cultum religionis</i> ; c. 24.5: <i>ad cultum instruantur religionis</i>	VC I: 5; I: 10; II: 11; common II: 12; II: 23; VJ 1
1: <i>Quanta intentione ac studio inquirendum sit, qualiter ad cultum religions tam operibus quam oratione tendatur</i>		VC II: 11: ..., <i>omni intentione ad cultum religionis aspirarent.</i>
4 /5 /8 /11 /13 /20 /22 /24: <i>si...si...si...</i> <i>sic...sic...sic ergo...</i> <i>sic ergo...sic</i>	<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i> 1.6/ 7/ 9/ 10/ 11/ 13: <i>sic ... sit ... sit ... sic ... sic ... sit ... sit ... sic ergo</i>	VC II: 9: <i>Sic enim... Sic enim ... Sic omnis ... Nihil enim</i>
5: <i>et cum eodem dicere possibus: Inquisivi</i>	<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i> 3.4: <i>cum Propheta orando dicant: Auerte oculos meos</i>	

<i>De accedendo</i>	<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani or Vita Iohannis</i>	
6: <i>omni intentione</i>		<i>VC I: 30: omni cum intentione; II: 10: omnem intentionem II: 11: omni intentione et devotione; II: 11: omni intentione ad cultum religionis aspirarent; VJ 2: et cultu religionis sub omni intentione</i>	<i>omni intentione appears occasionally</i>
6: <i>cum omni cordis contritione</i>	c. 6.28: <i>contritione deleantur cordis; 15.8: humili et contrito corde 19.8: cum cordis contritione</i>		common
6: <i>qui se exterius a saeculi desiderii atterit et interius cum omni cordis contritione per ardorem compun- tionis pollet</i>	c. 12.10–11: <i>ut dum exterius per temporalem oportunitatem manus operibus occupantur, interius mens cum linguae meditatione psalmorum ac Scripturarum recordatione dulcescat</i>		
8: <i>facinorum mole</i>	c. 6.6: <i>facinorum molem</i>		very rare expression; appears once in Ps.-Jerome, <i>Breviarium in Psalmos</i>

<i>De accedendo</i>	<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani or Vita Iohannis</i>	
8: <i>Beatae scilicet vitae praemium et aeterni muneris perenne suffragium 23: ad aeterna praemia tendat</i>	c. 5.11: <i>aeterna praemia accipiet</i>	<i>VC I: 10; II: 14: aeterna praemia caperent VJ 1: et eterne vite praemia capere</i>	<i>aeterna praemia:</i> common
8: <i>sine grande labore</i>	c. 11.3: <i>aut si labor grandis exigerit</i>	<i>VC I: 9: cum grandi labore</i>	common; also in Ps.-Jerome, <i>Breviarium in Psalmos</i>
10: <i>iuxta apostolum</i>	c. 1.11: <i>iuxta Apostolum; c. 5.5: iuxta Apocalipsin; c. 6.1: iuxta scripturarum seriem; c. 22.9: iuxta quod in Actum Apostolorum legimus</i>	<i>iuxta poetam iuxta Job iuxta Salomonem iuxta Evangelii iuxta Pauli sententiam iuxta Apostolum</i>	common
11: <i>testatur dicens</i>	<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines 5.15 and 5.17: testatus est dicens</i>		common
12: <i>aditus non denegetur</i>	c. 21.5: <i>aditum esse in postmodum denegandum</i>	<i>VC I: 9; I: 19; I: 30</i>	very rare
12: <i>obstinatae mentis</i>	c. 18.5: <i>obstinatae et durae mentis</i>	<i>VC II: 22: durae ac ingnavae mentis</i>	<i>obstinatae mentis:</i> rare
14: <i>divinae miserationis</i>		<i>VC II: 21; II: 22</i>	common
14: <i>tam corpore quam animo parati</i>	c. 2.12: <i>tam corporis quam animae provida</i>		rare

<i>De accedendo</i>	<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani or Vita Iohannis</i>	
15: <i>igne accensum</i>		<i>VC II: 1: subito igne febrium accensus</i>	common
19: <i>conditori placere</i>		<i>VC I: 20: placere conditore</i>	very rare
19: <i>iuxta psalmographi praeconium</i>	c. 8.1: <i>ad sonitum preconis</i> ; 14.1: <i>preconiis peruigil</i>	<i>VC I: 3: psalmographi praeconii</i> ; I: 17: <i>preconantis vox psalmographi.</i>	combination <i>praeconium/ psalmographus</i> exclusively here.
20: <i>si opus bonum ad vocem laudis iungitur</i>	c. 14.6: <i>Debet enim sacris eloquiis opera nectere sacra, ut quae eius imitatur doctrinam ex uoce, imitetur cultum ex opere, ₅ ne si in aliquo uoci opus contradixerit, fructum uocis non obtineat effectum. ₆ Sic ergo sit et uoce ornata et opere, ut et opus uoci et uox consentiat operi.</i>		
21: <i>divinae potentiae</i>		<i>VC I: 27; II: 2</i>	common
21: <i>sollicita religionis cura omni studio prosequitur</i>	13.4: <i>cum sollicito timoris studio gubernet</i>	<i>VC II: 9; II: 21; VJ 8: omni studio</i>	<i>omni studio:</i> common
22: <i>mens ... intenta</i> 26: <i>mentis intentio</i>	c. 8.2: <i>mens ad sonitum preconis intenta</i> ; c. 14.1: <i>anima uigore creatoris intenta preconiis peruigil maneat</i>	<i>VC II: 10: mente intenta preces fundens</i> ; VJ, <i>praefatio: mentis intentione</i>	appears occasionally in other sources

<i>De accedendo</i>	<i>Regula cuiusdam ad virgines</i>	<i>Vita Columbani or Vita Iohannis</i>	
23: <i>devotione ornata</i>	c. 1.6: <i>uoce ornata</i> ; 1.7: <i>beniuolentia ornata</i> ; 2.4: <i>humilitate ornata</i> ; 2.5: <i>actu religionis ornata</i> ; 5.11: <i>cultu pietatis ac dilectionis ornata</i>		
25: <i>ubertas lacrimarum</i>		VC II: 6; II: 13.	very rare
26: <i>pietatem clementis iudicis</i>	c. 6.15: <i>Quanta clementis iudicis pietas erga nos diffusa dinoscitur</i>	VC I: 4 and II: 11: <i>iudex clemens</i>	<i>Clemens iudex</i> is rarely used. The combination with <i>pietas</i> is unique. <i>Pietas</i> in combination with <i>clemens iudex</i> : extremely rare
27: <i>infundit medicinam</i>	c. 7.3: <i>medicinam infundit</i>		very rare

APPENDIX 5 *CARMEN DE HIBERNIA INSULA*

The first half of chapter 2 of Book One of the *VC* consists of a poem, which was probably not composed by Jonas, although he may well have added the initial line (*Columbanus etenim qui et Columba* ‘Columbanus, who is also called Columba’). E. K. Rand thought that the second line (*Ortus Hibernia insula, extremo Oceano sita*) was also an addition, but while the word *ortus* (‘born’) clearly belongs with Columba in the previous line, it is difficult to see what the subject of the following line is, if it is not *Hibernia insula* (‘the island of Ireland’) – and Rand himself goes on to begin his translation with ‘And this island ...’.¹ He is more persuasive in seeing the last two lines (*Insulae situs, ut ferunt, amoenus ac adversantium / Exterorum carens bella nationum*. ‘The site of the island, as they say, is pleasant, and lacks the wars of hostile foreign nations’) as being added.

Like Krusch, Rand saw the main body of the verse as not being by Jonas. Indeed, it must have been written by someone familiar with the west coast of Ireland, since the author talks about the ‘shores known to us’ (*nota litora nobis*). One might be tempted to ascribe the poem to Columbanus himself, but he is not associated with the West of Ireland, and linguistically none of the surviving writings attributed to him is so convoluted. Moreover, Jonas would presumably have identified him as the author if

1 Rand, ‘The Irish Flavor of the *Hisperica Famina*’, pp. 135–36. Rand’s translation of the whole poem is as follows (‘The Irish Flavor of the *Hisperica Famina*’, pp. 136–37): ‘And this island awaits the setting of the Titan, while the world turns and light descends into the western shadows, the sea. The waves’ huge masses, cruel in colour, wildly straying locks, curling hair, white glistening robe, broad backs of blue, smiting man’s hiding-places on the foaming shore, the farthest bay of earth, ne’er suffer the shores we know so well to entrust to them a gentle ship that craves the quivering brine. Over such lands does tawny Titan descend at the dense light of Arcturus, and hies to other parts of its orbit. Following the north wind it hies to its rising in the east, that born to a new life it may restore the kindly light to the world, and scatter its broad fire over the trembling sky. And so, reaching all the goals of day and night in its course, it purges the earth with its brightness and makes the lovely world all dripping with its heat.’

he had been. One might, therefore, ascribe the work to one of the saint's original companions, or perhaps to one of Jonas's fellow monks at Bobbio.

That the poem was written by an Irishman is indicated not only by the claim to knowledge of the Irish coast, but also by its literary style, which has links with the so-called *Hisperica Famina*, a Hiberno-Latin collection of verse from early medieval Ireland, which is well known for its elaborate syntax and recondite vocabulary.² Much of the vocabulary of the *VC* verses has a 'hisperic' ring, as can be seen by consulting the index to Michael Herren's edition of the A-Text of the *Hisperica Famina*.³ Obvious examples are the words *cerula* ('blue') (cf. *HF* A ll. 421, 481), and *moles* ('mountains') (*HF* A ll. 181, 241, 362, 562, etc.). *Spumea* in Jonas is an adjectival form of *spuma*, which also occurs in the *Hisperica Famina* (ll. 387, 482). With its ending in *-eus/-ea* it is what has been described as a 'Stoffadjectiv' – a form frequently found in Hisperic Latin.⁴ Another such adjective to be found in the *Hisperica Famina*, *Titaneus* (*HF* A ll. 111, 133, 303, 364), although not actually used in the poem transmitted by Jonas, calls to mind the double reference to 'Titan', the sun.⁵

Turning from the language of the poem to its scansion, matters become more contested. Rand argued that the lines in the *VC* are not 'hisperic' in the proper sense,⁶ and certainly they are not modelled on the 'golden line', with a central verb surrounded by noun + adjective combinations.⁷ Indeed, he suggested that what is regarded as a poem is actually in prose, although a number of its lines end in dactyl + spondee (i.e. a long syllable followed by two short syllables which are then followed by two long syllables: a hexameter cadence), such as *vertitur orbis*, *cerula terga*, *candore terras*. In recent years, however, Jim Adams, in a study of poetry from Roman North Africa, has concluded that a line of verse ending in an accentual hexameter cadence would have been regarded as a hexameter.⁸ As Roger Wright notes, the poem in Book One of the *VC* seems similar.⁹ He comments:

2 For the following discussion, we are indebted to ML for his observations and bibliographical suggestions, not least for the reference to Rand's article. For the *Hisperica Famina*, see Herren, ed., *The Hisperica Famina: The A-Text*.

3 Herren, ed., *The Hisperica Famina: The A-Text*, pp. 217–34.

4 For parallels, see Herren, ed., *The Hisperica Famina: The A-Text*, pp. 207–08.

5 As noted by ML.

6 Rand, 'The Irish Flavor of the *Hisperica Famina*', pp. 135–36.

7 As noted by ML.

8 Adams, 'The Poets of Bu Njem: Language, Culture and the Centurionate', pp. 114–16.

9 Roger Wright, personal communication.

By the time of this poem, phonemic vowel length was a thing of the distant past. Not just Merovingians, Early Romance-speakers of any geographical area and any class didn't have vowel length in speech; what they did have was word-stress (like in English), in which one syllable in a word of two or more syllables was stressed, and on the whole the stress-position in words was the same then as it is now in those Romance languages that have word-stress (i.e. not French). On the whole, if you ignore ancient lengths and stick to stressing the stressed vowels, most of the lines here end in -- as a hexameter would have done. E.g., the *sin-* of *sinunt* is stressed and the *-unt* of *sinunt* is unstressed, so *sinunt carinum* works as a hexameter ending ... The author's native language is a crucial factor in such verse.¹⁰

Rand saw the influence of 'native Irish verseforms' in the *Hisperica Famina*.¹¹

The poem presented in the second chapter of the *VC* is remarkably difficult to translate. Rand stated baldly, 'This is not an easy bit of verse'.¹² In his view it 'becomes impossible to work out a grammatical construction. It is best to take the words as the poet flings them at us in a series of images rather than as coordinated thoughts'.¹³ Krusch, in his edition,¹⁴ labelled lines 3–6 *locum implicatissimum* ('the most convoluted section'). He suggested that one follow Traube's reordering of the words, and also his repetition of the verb (*caedant*): *quo* (= *ubi*) *undarum inmanes moles colore truces et passim nimio crispanti crine latebras caedunt et ubi spumaea aequoris cana peplo, quem cerula terga raptim dant, litora (caedant), sinus ultimos terrarum*. We have not followed Rand's counsel of despair, but have translated the lines, following Traube's reordering, as 'there the huge mountains of waves, wild in colour, with profuse snaking locks, beat everywhere on the caves, and there, in a cloak that its blue backs suddenly reveal, they strike the white foamy seashores, the final curve of the land.' The word *latebras*, which can mean 'hiding places, retreats, lairs', we have taken to mean 'caves' (following a suggestion of GC), although Krusch suggested that it referred to (coastal) villages, and Rand translated the word as 'man's hiding places on the foaming shore'.¹⁵ The ensuing phrase is not

10 See Wright, 'Rhythmic Poetry and the Author's Vernacular', in *Sociophilological Study of Late Latin*, pp. 110–53; Norberg, trans. Ziolkowski, *Introduction to the Study of Medieval Latin Versification*; Norberg, *La poésie latine rythmique du haut Moyen Âge*.

11 Rand, 'The Irish Flavor of the *Hisperica Famina*', p. 136.

12 Rand, 'The Irish Flavor of the *Hisperica Famina*', p. 135.

13 Rand, 'The Irish Flavor of the *Hisperica Famina*', p. 136.

14 Krusch, p. 135 n. 1.

15 Rand, 'The Irish Flavor of the *Hisperica Famina*', p. 136.

much easier: *nec mitem sinunt carinam / Tremulo petentem salo dare nota litora nobis*. Like Rand, we have taken *litora nota nobis* as the direct object of *undarum inmanes moles* ('the huge mountains of waves') of the previous phrase, so that the sea does 'not allow the coast we know so well to release the small questing boat to the salt-swell'.

Rand, who agreed that it was made up of 'gorgeous words', summarized the poem as follows: 'Ireland has the best sunsets and sunrises in Christendom, but a devilously treacherous sea', and he went on to argue that 'This meaning – or if I am wrong as to the meaning, then some other meaning – is so trapped in the splendor of the poet's imagistic diction that it is hard to recognize.'¹⁶ While the meaning may not be immediately apparent, it is clear that it has a function in the text. Certainly, the poem describes the sun setting off the west coast of Ireland and rising again in the east via the north. This reverse circuit of the Sun seems to allude to Ecclesiastes 1:5–6, which also links the sun and the wind: 'The sun rises, the sun sets; then to its place it speeds and there it rises. Southward goes the wind, then turns to the north; it turns and turns again; back then to its circling goes the wind.' The east is understood to be where Christ will return at the end of Time, while the north was seen as the place of evil and from where retribution will come (Jeremiah 1:14; 6:22). In other words, far from being purely descriptive, as Rand argued, the poem is about decline and renewal, death and rebirth, and triumph over darkness. Placed at the very start of the narrative it clearly constitutes an important statement, even though Munro omitted it from his translation of Book One of the *VC*, and Rand claimed that 'it does not add much to the narrative besides a purple patch'.¹⁷

For early Christians, Christ was often associated with the sun as the Sun of Righteousness, the *Christos Helios* as He is depicted in a third-century mosaic in the Mausoleum of the Julii under St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, which portrays Jesus as *Sol Invictus* driving the horses of the sun's chariot. Columbanus in his letter of 613 to Pope Boniface IV calls Christ the 'supreme driver of that chariot ... true father, charioteer of Israel', alluding to 4 Kings 2:12, where the prophet Elijah ascends to heaven in a fiery chariot (*Ep.* 5.11). Both Columbanus and (earlier in the fifth century) Patrick, in his *Confession*, saw Christ as Elijah and the sun. In Columbanus's letter the coming of Christianity to Ireland is represented

16 Rand, 'The Irish Flavor of the *Hisperica Famina*', p. 137.

17 Rand, 'The Irish Flavor of the *Hisperica Famina*', p. 135.

as the sun that rises in the east, and crosses the sky into the west. Now that the sun has reached Ireland it has reached its furthest point in the west, and its journey is complete. For Columbanus, the conversion of Ireland marked the culmination of the preaching of the Gospel 'to the ends of the earth'.¹⁸ He presents this as the work of the Roman church, for the chariot of Christ was drawn by Saints Peter and Paul. The conversion of the Irish thus marked the realization of Rome's universal mission. Now that the Gospel has been preached to the ends of the world the *Eschaton* and Christ's Second Coming could take place. Columbanus and his monks, taking the message of the Gospel, of Christ (the Sun), from the west back east into the heartlands of the former Roman Empire heralded Christ's imminent return and the End of Time.

Inserted at the beginning of the *VC*, the poem precedes Jonas's account of Columbanus's birth, and of a miracle in which the saint's mother saw a vision of the sun that illuminates the whole world, shining from her womb. Despite the fact that the poem refers to Titan, rather than Helios, the sun can be understood as the biblical *lux* of John 1:9, 'the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world'. It is symbolic of Christ, the light of the world, but also, of Columbanus, who travelled from West to East, as the later *Life of Walaric* (Valéry) notes, in a passage that appears to link the sun's movement, as described in the poem, with the vision of the saint's mother.¹⁹ In the ninth century, the Reichenau monk Walahfrid Strabo, writing in southern Germany, would liken Columbanus to 'a bright ray of the fiery sun'.²⁰

The poem ends with *Amoenum reddens orbem calore madentem* ('With his heat rendering the world, wet with dew, pleasant again'). As already noted, the final lines (*Insulae situs, ut ferunt, amoenus ac adversantium / Exterorum carens bella nationum*) were probably added by Jonas to incorporate the verse better into the narrative.

Although the poem itself would seem not to be Jonas's composition, his incorporation of the lines signals a shift in perception from classical and late antique pejorative views of Ireland and the Irish to the image of Ireland as a holy island. This new perception was shaped by exiled Irish monks on the Continent in the early Middle Ages, as can be seen in their surviving poems. The representation of Ireland as a holy and thaumaturgic

18 Palmer, *Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 81–85.

19 *Vita Walarici* 6. On the problem of dating the *Vita*, see Goullet, 'Introduction', p. 22.

20 Walahfrid Strabo, *Vita Galli* I: 1.

island is most fully seen in Bede's comments on Ireland at the beginning of his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (I: 1) in the eighth century, and in the ninth century in Ermenrich of Ellwangen's remarkable exegesis on Ireland, in his letter to Grimald, the abbot of St Gallen.²¹ Jonas's perception was no doubt influenced by his monastic formation at Bobbio, where he would have come in contact with Columbanus's Irish monks, who had travelled with the saint following their expulsion from Burgundy in 610. In a multi-ethnic community such as Bobbio the Irish members of the community could voice their own perception of their island home as opposed to the liminal and pejorative views of classical ethnographers.

21 ed. Dümmler, *Ermenrici Ellwangensis epistola ad Grimaldum abbatem*.

APPENDIX 6 THREE DIPLOMAS ASSOCIATED WITH BOBBIO AND FAREMOUTIERS IN THE TIME OF JONAS¹

The three diplomas that follow are all closely associated with the contents of *VC*. Jonas himself, as archivist, would have known Agilulf's donation, and appears to cite it in *VC* I: 30. He was present in June 628 when Bertulf secured the exemption privilege from Pope Honorius.² He was also present in 634/35³ at the memorial service for Gibitrudis, who, according to Jonas, died at the time when Burgundofara fell dangerously ill – which is usually taken to be the context for the drawing up of the testament. None of the three documents survives in a form that is unquestionably original, even though the Bobbio exemption came to be the standard model for papal exemptions in the early Middle Ages,⁴ but we have translated the texts as they have been presented by Michael Richter⁵ and by Jean Guerout.⁶ Their publications should be consulted for further information.

I Agilulf's Donation of Bobbio to Columbanus (613)

Flavius Agilulf, the most outstanding man [and] king, to the venerable man, the blessed Columbanus and his disciples

We believe that a pious exchange will be paid to us by the Almighty Lord if the clergy in our kingdom are able to fulfil their vows to God with salubrious regulation. And therefore, at the basilica of the blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles, situated in the place which is called Bobbio, through this our general precept, we grant to Your Holy Paternity the right of living and owning, in the name of God, and we decree that [its]

1 The translations have been revised by GB.

2 *VC* II: 23.

3 *VC* II: 12.

4 Anton, *Studien zu den Klosterprivilegien*, pp. 55–57.

5 Richter, *Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 13–14 and 19.

6 Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', pp. 817–20.

bounds on all sides in every direction should be in a circuit of four miles, whether cultivated or uncultivated, excepting only the one-half of a well⁷ that we have conceded to Sundarit by our precept of donation. That aside, we grant everything [within] those bounds which we have mentioned above to the basilica of the blessed Peter, and to you, and to [anyone] who serves you and yours there, conferring this to be held in perpetuity. Wherefore, all our dukes, gastalds,⁸ and agents in all mandates, let none of them presume to act against the page of our command at any time, so that you can beseech the Lord day and night for the safety and stability of our kingdom.

Given in the palace at Milan, on 25 July, in the eighth year of our most happy reign, in the indiction [...]. Happily.

II The exemption of Pope Honorius for Bobbio (11 June 628)

And so you ask us to grant privileges of the Apostolic See to the monastery of Saints Peter and Paul founded in Bobbio, over which you are known to preside, so that it be established under the jurisdiction of our Holy Church, over which we preside through the agency of God, and [that it be] subject to the jurisdictions of no [other] church. For which reason we, being favourable to pious requests, grant for execution, by this our authority, that which we are asked by your love. And, therefore, we wholly prohibit every cleric [i.e. bishop] of every church from exercising any jurisdiction or authority over the aforesaid monastery, as well as his authority to celebrate the solemnity of the Mass, unless he is invited by the head of the monastery. Let it be your concern to enrich the brothers of the monastery, over which you preside, with noble morals and life beyond reproach, so that certainly, given that it [the monastery] has preferred that [its] subjects should be firmly endowed with Apostolic privileges, it might desire all the more, and indeed breathlessly seek, that they should be decorated with the inviolable gift of heavenly wealth by the daily prayers of the holy discipline.

7 The word used is *puteus*. Given the amount of water in the region, this can scarcely be an ordinary water supply, but might perhaps refer to one of the thermal springs (now known for their sodium chloride, bromine, and iodine) in the area.

8 A Lombard royal official: often a governor of a city and its district.

III The Testament of Burgundofara (26 October 633/34)

1. In the fifth year of the reign of the most glorious king Dagobert, on 26 October.

2. Since I, Burgundofara, in the name of God, having abandoned the malice and dignity of this world, for the love of Christ and the absolution of my sins, am known to have established the monastery of *Eboriacus*⁹ [Faremoutiers] in the name of religion, while I await in that monastery the time of my death and look forward to the Day of Judgement, I wish to set down as a testament and to confirm whatever has been handed over to this place by me, so that it might be useful to those serving God in that monastery, now and in the future.

3. So, with the notary Waldo in place, and with clerics [bishops] and laymen present as witnesses, I have called for this testament to be confirmed in my presence, so that no one may be able to challenge it in any civil or praetorian¹⁰ case, and may anyone wishing to seize rights for himself, having acted against the majesty of God, convicted by this testimony, repent.

4. Therefore I, Burgundofara, honouring the aforesaid place, *Eboriacus*, situated in the *pagus* [district] of Brie, which has been built in honour of Mary, [Our] Lady and Saint, and of saint Peter, prince of the Apostles, give in perpetuity those goods which I am seen to have in this world, that is my portion of the villa called *Campellae*,¹¹ which I received from my brothers [siblings?] as my share, together with its serfs, vineyards, woods, meadows, ponds and watercourses, with all the property and whatever toll-rights of mine can be found there.

5. I also grant to the aforesaid monastery my entire portion in the villa called *Cavaniacus*,¹² in the *pagus* of Chelles, together with the lands, houses, serfs, vineyards, woods, meadows, pastorage, ponds and watercourses, for the remedy of my soul.

9 Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', p. 807 insists on *Eboriacus* and not *Eboriacum* as the correct form.

10 *Casu ... praetoriano* would seem to indicate official royal action.

11 Champeaux, Seine-et-Marne: Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', p. 802 n. 3.

12 Chavigny, Seine-et-Marne, or, less likely, Gagny, Seine-et-Oise: Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', p. 809.

6. I also wish to be given to the aforesaid monastery that half of the villa called *Dulgofaiacus*, situated in the *pagus Aliodrensis*,¹³ which my father [Ch]agneric, of good memory, formerly conferred through the text of his testament, together with the lands, serfs, vineyards, woods, meadows, pasturage, ponds and watercourses, for the church of [Our] Lady Mary and saint Peter of the monastery of *Eboriacus*.

7. Also in the suburb of the city of Meaux¹⁴ [I give] my portion which I have been seen to receive there in legal division with my brothers [siblings?],¹⁵ with the lands, serfs, vineyards, meadows, ponds and watercourses, and property [and whatever toll-rights], to the holy monastery and to the whole community of nuns in that same place, *Eboriacus*.

8. As it is inserted in the Theodosian Law,¹⁶ so I grant it, just as any lay person, who does not leave sons, ought to convey it to legitimate heirs.

9. In addition I give to my dearest siblings, who are in agreement with this, Chagnulf, Burgundofaro, and Agnetrada, my portion of the villa called *Luvra*,¹⁷ which is in the *pagus* of Paris, with its lands, buildings, serfs, vineyards, woods, ponds and watercourses, and property [and whatever toll-rights].

10. And also, I desire that the aforesaid monastery of *Eboriacus* should have, in their entirety, the houses with their yards, both inside and outside the walls of Meaux, the portion which I received from my brothers [siblings?].

11. And I wish the aforesaid monastery to have the flour-mill on the river Marne, at the fast bridge.¹⁸

13 Augers-en-Brie, Seine-et-Marne: Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', pp. 809–10. It was here that Chainulf was killed: Fredegar IV: 83 (trans. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 70–71). *Dulgofaiacus* is unidentified.

14 Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', pp. 813–16 suggests that the original text was more specific at this point, and postulates that it mentioned the name of Chagneric's villa of *Pipimisiacum* (VC II: 7), which is identified as Poincy, four km from Meaux.

15 Normally, *germanos meos* would mean 'brothers', but a sister is mentioned in c. 9, below.

16 Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', p. 774 argues that this is a general citation, and not a reference to a specific law. GB, however, notes that this could be a citation of the 5th Novel of Marcian, which deals with wills in favour of clerics (trans. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code*, pp. 566–67), or indeed *Codex Theodosianus* V: 3, 1, 'On the estates of clerics and monks' (trans. Pharr, p. 107).

17 Louvres, Seine-et-Oise: Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', p. 804 n. 4.

18 Pont-Roide or Pont-Raide, Meaux: Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', p. 804 n. 5.

12. And likewise I wish to give the other flour-mill situated in Brie, on the *Alba* rivulet,¹⁹ for the remedy of my soul, and that my name may be inserted into the Book of Life.²⁰

13. And that feast days might be commemorated more solemnly before the holy altar, I wish to give to the aforesaid basilica of [Our] Lady Mary and saint Peter, of the monastery of *Eboriacus*, the vineyards, that is the two portions of land²¹ in the villa *Cavaniacus*, in the *pagus* of Chelles, which I have been seen to accept in exchange from my brother Chagnulf.

14. With regard indeed to my serfs in those villas and places named above, let those to whom I have assigned the title of freedom either by deed of manumission or charter, remain free men or women, with whatever private property I have given.

15. I call on the majesty of the Lord, that after my death, during the period of mourning²² of proper length, let my wishes be accepted, according to the law and custom of this place, with the merciful Lord approving in every way, so that this, which I donate for the remedy of my soul and the absolution of my sins, may be confirmed according to the laws, and legally agreed.

16. Truly, if anyone attempts to make changes to these wishes and to challenge them in any way, the ineffable power of the Lord having been invoked, I solemnly and fully declare that he should be held guilty of the crime of all my sins at the day of judgement, and that he be registered with the impious, who said of the Lord, 'Let him be crucified'.²³ And let him be placed outside the bounds of all the churches of God, and may the leprosy of Naaman the Syrian descend upon him,²⁴ so that he may thus be unable to break my will, and may in no way succeed in any other mendacious act, contrary to God himself.

19 Aubetin: Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', p. 804 n. 6.

20 This might be a reference to a liturgical *Liber Vitae*, a volume containing the names of those to be commemorated at Mass, although, as GB notes, it might be a more general reference to Psalm 69:28.

21 *Pedetura* or *pedatura* is an area of land measured by the foot.

22 The word *agonem* would normally refer to the suffering of a martyr or dying person. Here it refers to the period after Burgundofara's death.

23 Luke 23:23.

24 2 Kings 5. This is a standard anathema.

17. I have established and ordered to be established that these added curses and spiritual threats have been put in place, and I have wished to have my testament frequently read out to me, and that it should be recognized by all.

18. With confirmation attached.

19. Done in the monastery of *Eboriacus*, on 9 October.²⁵

²⁵ Guerout, 'Le testament de sainte Fare', pp. 782–84 notes that the dating clause is corrupt, and that it should read 26 October.

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